

THE
Methodist Monitor:
OR,
MORAL AND RELIGIOUS
Repository :

CONSISTING OF
Original Pieces and Selections
FROM A NUMBER OF RESPECTABLE WRITERS:
WITH
Extracts from various Pamphlets, &c.

Published among the Methodists since the Death of Mr. Wesley.

A Work calculated to disseminate useful Knowledge, at a small Expence,
among all Denominations of Christians : especially amongst the Methodists.

VOL. I.

By ALEX. KILHAM,
Minister of the Gospel.

" No Creed, Confession of Faith, or Articles of Religion, are farther
" to be regarded than they can be proved by the Scriptures, the only
" Rule, and the sufficient Rule of both Faith and Practice. And
" with regard to this, every Individual must examine and judge for
" himself; calling no Man, let his Abilities or Integrity be what
" they may, Master or Father, on Earth, and crediting no Man's
" Doctrine further than it is, in his Judgment, proved from Scripture :
" in his Judgment, I say ; for as every Man must give an Account of
" himself to God, so must every Man judge for himself."

MR. JOSEPH BENSON'S Answer to Dr. TATHAM.

LEEDS:

Printed by BINNS and BROWN ;

For the AUTHOR, and sold by him ; also by Murgatroyd, Chiswell-
street, and Wardell, No. 7, Monmouth Street, West Street, London ;
Binns, Leeds ; Binns, Halifax ; Wright, Colepit Lane, Sheffield ;
Edwards, Broad-street, Bristol ; Peat, Temple-street, Birmingham ;
Sutton, Bridlesmith-gate, Nottingham ; and by the Persons that dis-
pose of the Trial, and others, in Plymouth-Dock, Bath, Chester,
Liverpool, Manchester, &c. &c. &c.



P R E F A C E.

THE religion of Jesus Christ is of such importance to the world at large, that no person can estimate the advantages that result from it. Whatever is for the furtherance of the gospel, ought to be attended to with the greatest care; and whatever has hindered its progress, should be removed as soon as possible. *If the word of the Lord run, and is glorified*, thousands will be brought from darkness to light; they will *know the truth, and the truth will make them free*. If in any place it is cramped in its progress, or prevented from having suitable effects where it is preached, this ought to stir up the minds of all that love the Redeemer in sincerity, to inquire after the cause. This is not only the duty of ministers that publish the good tidings of salvation, but of all that wish well to the interests of christianity.

For many years these nations have been greatly blessed of God. The people have been favoured with a greater portion of liberty of conscience than has been allowed in any other nation in Europe; thousands have availed themselves of the privileges they have enjoyed, and experienced many glorious advantages from them. In the last century, there were many burning and shining lights, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. By their indefatigable labours in the ministry, and by their excellent writings, very many were brought to the knowledge of the truth. They, being dead, yet speak to us; their writings are still highly esteemed by all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

In the beginning of this century, it is generally acknowledged, that true religion was brought to a very low ebb. That fatal act, which banished so many excellent ministers from the establishment, was not felt so much in its effects immediately after it was executed, as it was when God had taken those worthy and respectable men

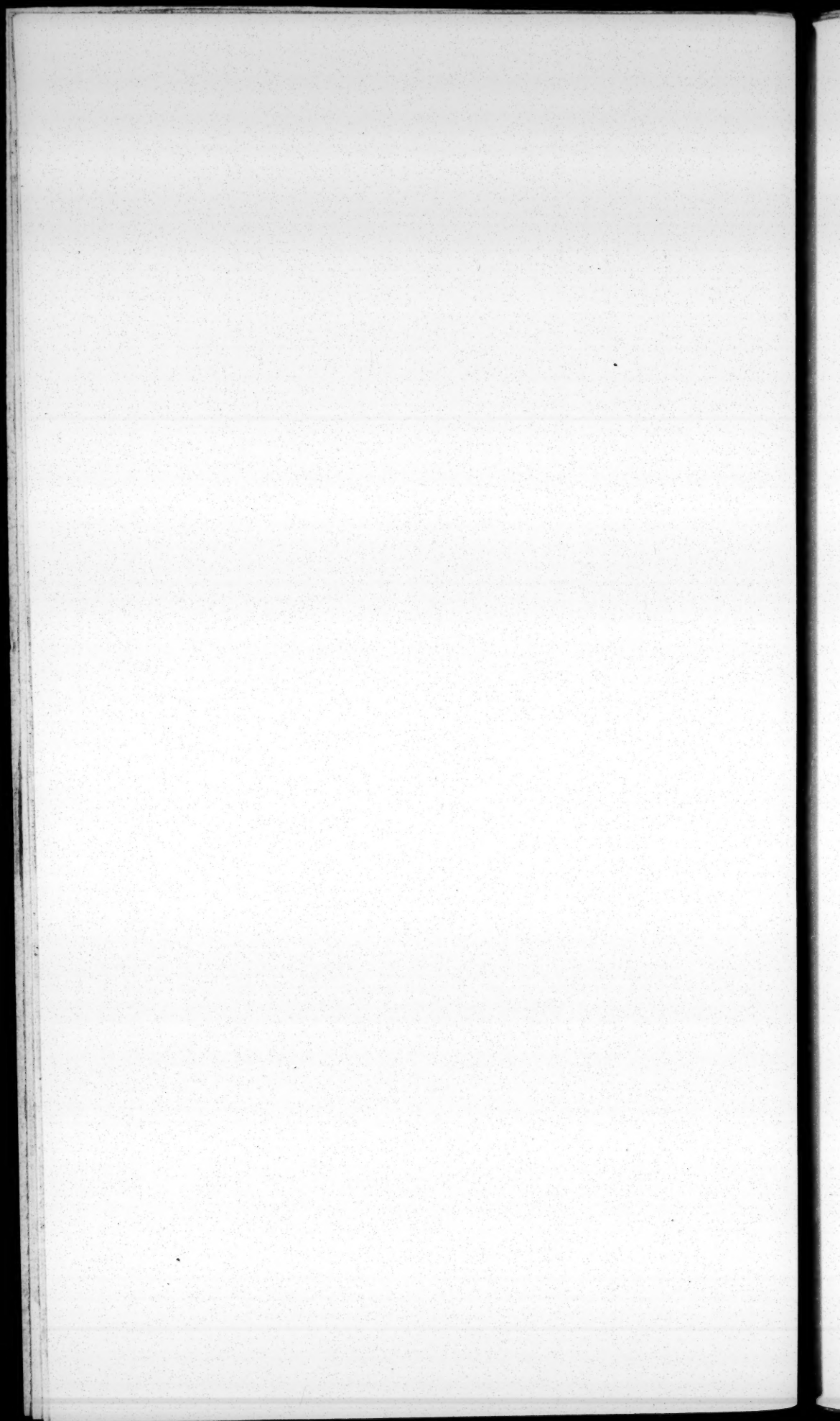
to their great reward. For, though they were banished from the national church, many of them preached publicly to the people in other places, and were exceedingly blessed in their labours. And as many of them journeyed from place to place, they did not fail to preach the gospel, whenever they had an opportunity of doing it. But when they were called to their reward, very few were found to fill up their place. Hence it is remarked, that in the early part of this century, there were very few ministers who cared for the souls of the people. When it pleased God to raise up Dr. Watts, and others, to declare the truth, with the Holy Ghost sent from above, the gloom was in some measure dispersed; especially in those places where they preached. Their diligent and faithful labours were crowned with great success.

When Messrs. Wesleys and Whitfield were called into the highways and hedges to compel sinners to come to the gospel-feast, thousands cheerfully obeyed the word of God, and were made partakers of the grace of life:—Though they soon divided, yet their extraordinary and unremitted labours, were crowned with abundant success. Mr. Whitfield soon finished his course with joy, but his followers are still numerous and respectable, in many places.

The Methodist connexion, founded by Mr. John Wesley, has prospered, and spread itself more extensively than that which Mr. Whitfield established. Our venerable Father in the Gospel, lived to see the work, that at first appeared like a man's hand, spreading its influence through the nations, distilling life and peace into the hearts of thousands of myriads. He greatly rejoiced, that he had neither run, nor laboured in vain. He was called to his reward, full of years, when he had finished the great work which was given him to accomplish.

Mr. Wesley often controverted the remark made by Luther,—That hardly any particular revival of religion continued more than fifty years. Though he readily acknowledged the truth of this observation, as it referred to many revivals, yet he could not admit it as applicable to our connexion. He lived himself more than fifty years, after the first society was formed in London.

Since the death of Mr. Wesley, the work has been greatly revived in many places, chiefly by prayer-meetings. These have been carried on, in general, by local preachers, leaders, and private members. It is well known, however,



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view but blackening the characters of the preachers, that our people and the world might abhor them—to sow strife and discord among the different societies—to divide and devour the followers of Christ—and to raise myself to the head of a party, I should act like a fiend, and every sincere lover of Christ ought to look upon me with indignation, and spurn what I have written, with suitable abhorrence. But while I am assured the existing evils among us are calculated to ruin our connexion, and that our exposing them in the manner we have done is the direct way to have them renounced, whatever consequences may follow from the opposition of preachers, trustees, stewards, leaders, or private members in any place, we are the innocent cause of them. In the midst of the conflicts which happen, *our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.*

Mr. Bradburn greatly encourages all that act uprightly, according to their views, in a sermon which he delivered to the Conference in Leeds, 1793, from 2 Cor. viii. 23. “How amiable is the man, who loses sight of his own interest, for the public good; who is proof against flattery and threatenings; and who with principles and a conduct as simple as the light, magnifies his office, discharges his duty, and perseveres with zeal, patience, and unshaken firmness, in defending his own, and the people’s religious privileges! May God Almighty enable us all to be herein like minded.” *Arminian Mag.* for 1794.

I shall conclude this Preface, with an extract from Mr. Fletcher’s Prefatory Epistle, humbly addressed to Protestants, in the fifth volume of his works.

He says, “You know how hard the Romanists fought for their errors at the time of the reformation. They pleaded, that antiquity, synods, councils, fathers, canons, tradition, and the church were on their side; and they so obscured the truth by urging scripture metaphors, and by quoting unguarded passages from the fathers, that thousands of simple souls knew not which of the contending parties had the truth on their side. The Reformers *protested* these things in general: 1. That right reason has an important place in matters of faith. 2. That all matters of faith may, and must be decided
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“ by scripture understood reasonably, and consistently with
 “ the context. 3. And, That antiquity and fathers, tra-
 “ ditions and councils, canons and the church, lose their
 “ authority when they depart from sober reason and plain
 “ scripture. These three general *protests* are the very
 “ ground of our religion, when it is contra-distinguished
 “ from popery. They who stand to them deserve, in my
 “ humble opinion, the title of *True Protestants*.

“ Christian candor is nothing but a readiness to hear rea-
 “ son and plain scripture. Sincerely desirous to *prove all*
 “ *things, to hold fast that which is good, and to approve*
 “ *things which are excellent*. Protestants are then never
 “ afraid to bring their creed to a *reasonable and scriptural*
 “ test. And conscious that the mines of natural and re-
 “ vealed religion are not yet exhausted, they think with
 “ the apostle, that if any man supposes that he hath learn-
 “ ed all that he should know, *he is vainly puffed up in his*
 “ *fleshy mind, and knows nothing yet as he ought to know*.

“ Hence it is, that of all the tempers which true Protec-
 “ tants abhor, none seem to them more detestable than that
 “ of those *Gnosticks*, who under the common pretence of
 “ *orthodoxy or infallibility*, shut their eyes against the light,
 “ think plain scripture beneath their notice, enter their pro-
 “ test against reason, steel their breast against conviction,
 “ and are so rooted in blind obstinacy, that they had rather
 “ hug error in an old fantastic dress, than embrace the
 “ naked truth, newly emerging from under the streams
 “ of prejudice:—impetuous streams these, which *the dra-*
 “ *gon casts out of his mouth, that he may cause the celestial*
 “ *virgin to be carried away with the flood*. Rev. xii. 15.
 “ Alas! how many professors are there, who like St. Ste-
 “ phen's opponents, judges, and executioners, are neither
 “ able to resist, nor willing to admit the truth; who
 “ make their defence by *stopping their ears, and crying out,*
 “ *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we;*
 “ who thrust the supposed heretic out of their sanhedrim;
 “ who, from the press, the pulpit, or the dictator's chair,
 “ send volleys of hard insinuations, or soft assertions, in
 “ hopes that they will pass for solid arguments; and who,
 “ when they have no more stones or snow-balls to throw
 “ at the supposed Philistine, prudently avoid drawing *the*
 “ *sword of the Spirit*, retire behind the walls of their fan-
 “ cied orthodoxy, raise a rampart of slanderous contempt
 “ against the truth that besieges them, and obstinately
 “ refuse

“ refuse either candidly to give up, or manfully to contend for the unscriptural tenets which they will impose upon others as pure gospel.

“ Whether some of my opponents, good men as they are, have not inclined a little to these sons of prejudice, I leave the candid reader to decide. They have neither answered nor yielded to the arguments of my Checks. They are shut up in their own city. Strong and high are thy walls, O mystical Jericho! thy battlements reach unto the clouds; but *truth*, the spiritual ark of God, is stronger, and shall prevail. The bearing it patiently around thy ramparts, and the blowing of rams’ horns in the name of the Lord, will yet shake the very foundation of thy towers. O that I had the honour of successfully mixing my feeble voice with the blasts of the champions who encompass the devoted city! O that the irresistible shout, *reason and scripture—Christ and the truth*, was universal! If this were the case, how soon would Jericho and Babylon fall together.

“ I submit the inspection of this attack to true protestants. Direct me where I am wrong, assist me where I am right, nor refuse to support my feebleness by your ardent prayers; for, next to the Captain of our Salvation, I look to you for help and comfort.

“ I entirely rest the cause upon *protestant* ground, that is, upon *reason and scripture*. Nevertheless, to show our antagonists that we are not afraid to meet them upon any ground, I prove by sufficient testimonies from the fathers, and the reformers, that the most eminent divines in the primitive church and our own, have passed the straits which I point out, especially when they weighed the heavy anchor of prejudice, had a good gale of divine wisdom, and steered by the christian mariner’s compass (*the word of God*) more than by the *false lights* hung out by party men.

“ I have been charged with widening the breaches, which the demon of bigotry has made among religious people; but, if I have done it, I take the Searcher of Hearts to witness, that it has been with such a design, as made our Lord *bring fire upon earth*—the fire of truth, to burn the stubble of error, and to rekindle the flame of love. However, have I in years past made a wound *rashly* (of which I am not yet conscious) in this book I bind it up, and bring the healing, though (to
“ proud

“proud and relaxed flesh) *painful* balsam. This book is
 “entirely written upon a pacific plan: If I have, some-
 “times, given the contending parties a keen reproof,
 “in obedience to the Apostolic precept, *Rebuke them sharp-*
 “*ly*, it is only to make them ashamed of their conten-
 “tious bigotry, that I may bring them to reason the
 “sooner. And if prejudiced readers will infer from
 “thence, that I am a *bad man*, and that my pen dis-
 “tills gall, I forgive their hasty conclusion: I once
 “more send them back to the good men of old, who
 “have reprov'd far *less* errors with far *greater* severi-
 “ty than I allow myself in: And I ask, If persons im-
 “patient of controul, do not always put wrong con-
 “structions upon the just reproofs which they are deter-
 “mined to disregard?”

A. KILHAM.

LEEDS, October 1, 1796.

THE Methodist Monitor.

“ To write and to speak freely is our duty ; it requires no apology, but deserves praise. ‘ TRUTH MAKES A DISCOURSE OFFENSIVE,’ is an old observation ; but he who, regardless of his interest, voluntarily incurs the odium which arises from doing his duty, is not culpable—*We ought to obey God rather than man.*”—

Letter of a Trustee.

Essay on Liberty of Conscience.

MR. Bradburn says, in his Sermon on Equality, “ All men are perfectly and entirely, in mind and degree, on equality with each other in UNLIMITED, UNCONTROLLED, LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE : That is, an absolute indefeasible right to think and to determine for themselves in every thing purely religious. If a number of people, or an individual, simply wish to think of God as well as they can, and to worship him in their own way, can any man interfere by coercive measures, without exalting himself in the temple of God, and usurping the dominion of conscience, which is the sacred prerogative of the Most High ? It is in vain to urge, that force may be of use to reclaim ignorant, refractory people ; persecution may make hypocrites, but it never did, it never will make rational converts to pure and undefiled religion. The utmost length that mortal beings have a right to go, in seeking to make others think and act as they do on religious subjects, is to reason with, and persuade them, by affectionate words,

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and sound arguments. While a man approves himself a good citizen, have either *popes or bishops—councils or convocations—parliaments or kings*, the least authority from God, to interrupt him in the exercise of his religion?—

Genuine religion does not need the assistance of human power, nor human policy, either to support its being, or further its propagation. Nay, pure religion is so far from standing in need of such helps, that all the exertions of human authority, enforced by all the terrors of an inquisition or a bishop's court, do irreparable mischief to genuine piety, so far as they are suffered to interfere.

“ In what an awful state, then, are persecutors? Any who thrust themselves between a rational, immortal spirit, and the God to whom it is accountable! Yet where is the nation that has always been free from this horrid crime? Pagans, Jews, Mahometans, Papists, and Protestants, have persecuted, as they rose or sunk in worldly power; all owing to the unnatural connexion of temporal interest, or with peculiar modes of religion; or to the pride and ignorance of mankind.—Leave the human mind free to exercise, as it sees good, the right of private judgment in matters of faith and worship; for **HEREIN ALL MANKIND ARE PERFECTLY EQUAL**: and all who object to this, are persecutors in principle, whatever may be their conduct.”

After these excellent words of Mr. Bradburn, we shall give our readers the sentiments of Mr. Robinson on this subject. His *abilities*, his *candour*, and *liberality* are so well known, that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon them in this work. The following passages are taken from his Prefaces to Saurin's Sermons, and are worthy of being seriously attended to by all who wish to be led by the unerring word of God:—

“ That spirit of inquiry, which produced the reformation, operated in France, as in all other countries: and gave being to an endless variety of different sentiments of religion. All the reformers, however, agreed in one grand article, that is, in substituting the authority of the holy scriptures in the place of the infallibility of the bishop of Rome.

“ The elevation of an obscure book, (for such, to the shame of popery, the bible had been,) to the dignity of a supreme judge, whose decisions were final, and from which there

there lay no appeal, naturally excited the attention of some, who were capable, and of many, who thought themselves so, to examine the authenticity of so extraordinary a book. At the reformation, the infallibility of the pope was the popular inquiry; and, after it, the infallibility of Jesus Christ came under consideration. Curiosity and conscience concurred to search; and several circumstances justified the inquiry.

“ Many spurious books had been propagated in the world; the Jewish nation, and the Romish church, paid as much regard to tradition as to the holy scriptures; Protestants derived different, and very contrary doctrines from the same scriptures; the authenticity of some books of both testaments had never been universally acknowledged; and the points in litigation were of the last importance. These considerations excited the industry of a multitude of critics. One examined the chronology of the bible, another the geography of it, a third its natural philosophy, a fourth its history; one tried its purity by the rules of grammar; and another measured its style by the laws of rhetoric; and a most severe scrutiny the book underwent.

“ Nothing came to pass in this inquiry but what might have been expected. Some defended the book by solid, and some by silly arguments; while others reprobated it, as void of any rational proof at all. There are certain pre-requisites essential to the investigation of truth, and it is hardly credible, that all who examined, or who pretended to examine, the divinity of the christian canon possessed them.

“ No sooner had Charles IX. published the first edict of pacification in France, in 1562, than there appeared at Lyons, along with many other sects, a party, who called themselves Deists. The edict provided, that no person should be persecuted on account of matters of conscience, and this sect claimed the benefit of it.

“ Deists differ so much from one another, that it is hard to define the term *Deism*, and to say precisely what the word stands for. Dr. Clarke takes the denomination in the most extensive signification, and distinguishes deists into four sorts.

“ The *first* class believe the *existence* of a Supreme Being, who made the world; but who does not at all concern himself in the management of it.

“ The *second* consists of those, who believe not only the being, but also the providence of God, with respect to the natural world; but who, not allowing any difference between moral good and evil, deny that God takes any notice of the moral good or evil actions of men; these things depending, as they imagine, on the arbitrary constitutions of human laws.

“ The *third* sort, having right apprehensions concerning the natural attributes of God, and his all-governing providence, and some notion of his moral perfections also, yet being prejudiced against the notion of the immortality of the human soul, believe that men perish entirely at death, and that one generation shall perpetually succeed another, without any future restoration, or renovation of things.

“ The *fourth* consists of those, who believe the existence of a Supreme Being, together with his providence in the government of the world, as also the obligations of natural religion: but so far only, as these things are discoverable by the light of nature alone, without believing any divine revelation. These last are the only true deists.”

“ The rise of the deists, along with that of other sects and parties among the reformed churches, seemed to confirm one argument of the Roman Catholics against the reformation. When the reformers had pleaded for the sufficiency of revelation, and for the private right of judging of its meaning, the divines of the church of Rome had always replied, that unanimity in the faith is the test of the true church of Christ; that the church of Rome had always enjoyed such an unity; that the allowance of liberty of conscience would produce innumerable opinions; that people of the same sentiments would associate for the support and propagation of their pretended faith; and that, consequently religious parties would counteract one another, to the entire subversion of christianity itself. Hence they inferred the absurdity of that principle, on which protestantism stood, and the absolute necessity of a living infallible judge of religious truths. The event above-mentioned seemed to confirm this reasoning.

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“ When these ideas entered the mind of a man of fruitful genius in the church of Rome, they operated in the most eccentric manner imaginable. A popular orator, or, who did ten times more mischief, a court-chaplain, would collect a few real improprieties among protestants, subjoin a thousand more irregularities of his own invention, mere creatures of his superstitious fancy, paint them in colours the most frightful, exhibit them to public view under images the most tragical, ascribe them all to that horrid monster the right of private judgment, and by these means endeavour to establish the old system, that destroyed men's lives, on the ruins of that new one, which benevolently proposed to save them.

“ The weaker protestants were intimidated by this vile bombast, and the wiser, who had been educated papists, that is to say, whose tender minds had been perverted with a bad philosophy, and a worse divinity, were hard pressed with this idle argument. The famous Peter Viret, who was pastor of the reformed church at Lyons, at this first appearance of the deists, not only wrote against them; but, we are sorry to say, he did more, he joined with the archbishop's vicar in persecuting them. What a motley figure! The voice of Jacob, and the hands of Esau!

“ Some of the more candid protestants contented themselves with making two observations, which they thought, were sufficient to answer the objections of Rome on this article. First, they said, it is not true that there are no religious controversies in the church of Rome; there are two hundred and thirty-seven contrarieties of doctrine among the Romish divines. Secondly, if it were true, the quiet of the members of that church would not prove their unity in the faith. A negative unanimity, that is, a freedom from religious differences, may proceed from ignorance, negligence, or fear; the two first resemble the quiet of night, when all are asleep, or the stillness of a church yard, where all are dead; and the last is the taciturnity of a slave under a tyrant's rod. These observations were not impertinent, for although none of our disputes are managed without humbling marks of human infirmity, yet, on a cool balance of accounts, it will appear, that the moral good produced by liberty of conscience, is far greater than the moral evil suffered. Peevish

tempers, and puerile mistakes, mix with free inquiry: but without inquiry fair and free we should have no religion at all.

“ Had the protestants done only that with the writings of Moses and Paul, which they did with the writings of Homer and Tacitus, had they fetched them out of dusty holes in libraries, exposed them to public view, and left them to shift for themselves, their authenticity, we presume, would have shined with inimitable lustre; for fewer objections have lain against the book, than against the methods, that have been used to enforce it. But that fatal notion of uniformity, this absurd dogma, unity in the faith, is the test of a true church, misled those worthy men, and they adopted the spirit of persecution, that child of the *mother of abominations*, Revelations xvii. 5. whom folly had produced, and whom cruelty had hitherto maintained.

“ In order to vie with the church of Rome in point of uniformity, and to excel it in point of truth, the reformers extracted, what they supposed, the sense of scripture; not on plain, obvious, essential truths; but on doctrines extremely perplexed, and difficult; these extracts they called confessions of faith; these they signed, and all, who refused to sign them, they disowned, and persecuted out of their communities.

“ Having done these things, not according to the pattern *shewn* by their divine Master, in his plain and peaceful sermon on the mount of Olives, Heb. viii. 5. but according to the *arcana imperii* of the *woman who sitteth on seven mountains, and who reigneth over the kings of the earth*, Rev. xvii. 9, 18. they boasted of enjoying as good an uniformity as that of which the catholic church vaunted.

“ If they, who first prosecuted these unrighteous measures in the protestant churches, could have foreseen the dismal consequences of them, surely they must have lain in sackcloth and ashes to lament their antichristian zeal, which by importing exotics from Rome, by planting them in reformed churches, and by flattering the magistracy into the dirty work of cultivating them, spoiled the growth of reason and religion, and cherished under their deleterious shade, nothing but that unprofitable weed—implicit faith.

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“ Let a dispassionate spectator cast his eye on the christian world, and when he has seen the rigorous measures, that have been used to establish, as it is called, the faith of the reformers; let him turn his eye to the church of Rome on the one hand, and to sectaries on the other, and attend to the consequences of these measures among both, catholics laugh at protestant arguments against the infallibility of the bishop of Rome. See, say they, *mutant clypeos*, the reformed have destroyed one pope to create an hundred. Calvin is infallible at Geneva, Luther in Germany, in England Cranmer, and in Scotland Knox! How wise the doctrine of infallibility! how just and necessary the practice of the inquisition! The pretended protestants have tried in vain to govern churches without severity; they themselves, who have exclaimed the most violently against it, have been obliged to adopt it. Sectaries, on the other hand, avail themselves of these practices, and, not distinguishing between christianity itself, and the professors of it, charge that on the laws of our prince, which is chargeable only on the inadvertency of his subjects.

“ Other times, other manners! Whether the reproaches of the papists, the increase of learning, piety, and experience, or whatever else have meliorated the reformed churches, the French protestants rarely persecute, and when they do, it is plain, they do that as a body in a synod, which not one of them would dare to avow as a private divine. Dangerous distinction! Should an upright man vote for a measure, which he would blush to enforce? Should he not endeavour to abrogate canons, which, for the soul of him, he has not impiety enough to execute? Shall protestants renounce that *merchandise* of Rome, which consists of *odours, and ointments, and chariots, and purple, and silk, and scarlet*, and continue that more scandalous traffic, which consists of *slaves and souls of men*? Rev. xviii. 12, 13.

If a counsel, or a work, be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, Acts v. 38, 39. is one of the surest axioms in the world, and, if there be such a thing in the world as dignity, that is, propriety of character, it must be in that christian, who disdaining every carnal weapon, maintains the truth of his religion by placid reasoning, and by a holy life. Other influence is unscriptural, and unnatural too. We may admire the genius of a deist, avail ourselves of his learning, and lament his abuse of both: but we may
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not touch his person, his property, his liberty, his character, his peace. *To his own master he standeth or falleth*, Rom. xiv. 4.

"We beg leave to subjoin three observations in regard to deism. Deists are not so numerous as some have imagined. Real christians have occasioned violent prejudices against christianity. Very few deists have taken up the argument on its true grounds; and they who have, could not support it.

"*Deists are not so numerous as some have imagined.* Mons. de Voltaire has thought proper to inform his countrymen, in his *Additions* to his *General History*, that "Deism, which Charles II. seemed openly to profess, became the reigning religion" in England: that "the sect is become very numerous:" and that "a number of eminent writers have made open profession of deism." How this agreeable French writer came to know this, who can tell, it, as he affirms a little lower, "Deists allow a diversity of opinions in others, and seldom discover their own;" and, if "deists have only a private form of worship, each worshipping God in his own house, and assisting without scruple at all public ceremonies?" Surely M. Voltaire mistook, he meant to describe a hypocrite, and not a deist.

If a deist be one, who, having examined the religion of nature and the religion of scripture, gives the preference to the former, and rejects the latter, it may be affirmed, I think, that the number of deists is very small. In a comparative view, the number is too inconsiderable to be mentioned. The rank of a Herbert, the wit of a Shaftesbury, the style of a Bolingbroke, the scurrilous buffoonery of a Woolston, along with the wisdom and piety of the Lockes, and Lelands, and Lardners, who have opposed them, have given a name to deism: but the number of its professors is trifling, and of no account. If Mons. de Voltaire meant to relate an historical fact, he ought to have enumerated the numerous professors of christianity, and the eminent writers in defence of it, and then the numerous professors of deism would have diminished and disappeared. If he meant to give a sanction to deism on account of its numerous defenders, he is a fresh example of that weakness, to which great philosophers are sometimes subject, the weakness of sacrificing a sound logic to a silly prejudice.

[*To be continued.*]

TO MR. KILHAM.

SIR,

Contentions, censures, and excommunications in religious societies, are generally great impediments to true religion. But *it must needs be that offences come*; the woe falls on the man by whom they come. The minds of thousands are now examining whether *you* or others are the cause of the present strife. Were the methodists an *immaculate*, and *impeccable* community, there would be no difficulty in determining; but whatever faults have accompanied your labours, a faithful (and were it in some things vehement and unguarded) attack of principles and facts injurious to a large body of people, entitle you to the attention and esteem of those, who are not hasty to imbibe prejudices, or espouse the cause of a party. Unbiaſſed minds may probably find your integrity and zeal for the public good, to out-weigh all imperfections in the labours of your pen.

Considering your regard for the public good, the writer of these lines has ventured to trouble you with an abstract of a book, which, through the channel of your Monitor, may spread its light among thousands that have hitherto been unacquainted with its contents. Whatever it may have suffered by this abridgment, I am not able to determine; but I make no scruple in declaring, that the well known piety, judgment, candor, and moderation of the author, will be a sufficient recommendation to most of your intelligent readers.

As soon as I saw your advertisement for the Monitor, several difficulties occurred to me that might attend your labours; but it gave me some satisfaction on reflecting, that at a very early part of your work, you might present your readers with the out-lines of your sentiments, in the language of a man, whose name commands the esteem of all parties: against whom, the slightest suggestion, would endanger an impeachment of the understanding of him that made it; if not a suspicion of his integrity. There is only one objection worth naming that can be raised against the principles of this abstract; that is, That Dr. Watts was
a Dis-

a Dissenter: consequently, by your introducing his sentiments, some of your readers may suppose that you avow to the world, your desire for the Methodists to become a distinct body of Dissenters; and some may raise a clamour against you on this subject. But it may be observed, that this is totally groundless. For it will not be difficult to prove, that the principles contained in Dr. Watts's book, are applicable to Methodism, without ordination, baptism, or the Lord's supper. It is necessary for our friends to keep this in view, who are solicitous that the Methodists should never consider themselves more than a religious society, as well as those who think us a distinct church. Neither the one nor the other alters the subject. Dr. Watts proves, that a religious society, when they have no express divine direction, should be governed by the voice of the community, and not the assumed power of individuals, or a small part of the community. As I apprehend, this is the great principle you are contending for, without knowing the particulars you may see proper to insert in your publication, if you approve of the abstract, it may fill up a part of two or three Numbers.

Sincerely praying, that by a *serious, affectionate, and prudent* manifestation of the truth, to the consciences of all that read the Monitor, you may promote the furtherance of the gospel of Christ, and the salvation of all men,

I remain, your's, &c.

MELANCTHON.

An Abstract of Watts's Rational Foundation of a Christian Church.

THE sentiments of his preface appear so suitable to the purpose, that they will materially account for this abstract:—

“ The principles on which christian churches are built, are so plain, so natural, easy, and so much the same with those which give rise to all the well-formed societies in the world, that one would think there should not be such a mat-

a matter of debate, and controversy among christians upon these subjects, as we have unhappily found. For, besides the reasonableness of the things that are required for this purpose, our blessed Saviour has given many promises to favour this practice of holy fellowship. So that if there is found but such christian graces as may justly be expected among christians, I would hope such sentiments as these might continue without interruption. I trust no individual person will find conscience imposed upon by any article here mentioned; nor will any society find itself obliged to do any thing, in the exercise of its government, but what is agreeable to the rules by which they conduct themselves in the affairs of human life. Nor are christians hereby confined to uniformity in their principles and practice, but toleration is allowed to promote peace and edification.

I would only add, that if any thing contained in them may be effectual, through the divine blessing, to set the terms of christian fellowship in a juster light—to secure the necessary principles of christianity—to remove causes of offence among the churches—and to lead the several parties of christians to more moderate and charitable sentiments concerning each other, I shall have abundant reason to rejoice in my attempt, and give glory to the God of truth and peace.

SECT. I.

Reason and Revelation agree to require Social Religion.

1. Man, as an intellectual and social being, owes worship to his Creator, in his *social* as well as *single* capacity. He owes also assistance to his fellow creatures in the affairs of religion, as in those of the natural and civil life. *Social religion* is therefore the duty of every man, where he can meet with such fellow worshippers, as to lay a foundation for union in the same acts of worship, and mutual help in religious concerns.—These three following reasons, among others, oblige him to it.

1. That he may do honour to God among men. Job xxxviii. 7. Heb. xii. 13. Rev. iv. 5. 2. Man in his social capacity is always wanting and receiving favours from God. 3. It is a necessary means of maintaining religion in the world.

2. God

2. God teaches us religion either by the light of nature, which the heathens enjoy; or by divine revelation. As revealed religion in general acknowledges natural religion for its foundation, so all the parts of social religion, so far as they are revealed and prescribed, are founded on principles of natural light and reason. Human reason is the first ground and spring of all human religion. Man is obliged to religion because he is a reasonable creature. Reason obliges us to consider the evidences of revelation and to admit what is just.

3. When we have received, upon just evidence, the New Testament, as a revelation sent us from heaven, then our own reason obliges us to search and submit to it. In many of the evangelical doctrines, such as the divinity and incarnation of the Son of God, &c. &c. all the economy of our salvation is revealed to us, with the personal duties of faith, hope, &c. &c. arising from them, we have something over and above the doctrines and duties prescribed by reason; but in the rules Christ has laid down for our conduct in social religion, we shall find them for the most, such as human reason would lead us to perform; this will sufficiently appear in the following particulars.

SECT. II. *Instances of the Agreement of Reason and Revelation in Social Religion.*

1. The light of reason teaches, that those who profess the same religion, must sometimes meet together to worship God. When it is impossible that they should all be convened in one place, it is necessary they should be separated into distinct societies for the same purpose: and does not the New Testament sufficiently indicate the same things? Rom. xv. 6. Heb. x. 25. 1 Cor. xvi. 1. Rev. i. 4. 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

2. The light of nature and reason teaches, that those thus joined together should be agreed in the most important points of religion, Amos iii. 3. otherwise perpetual confusion would arise in the worship itself, which would destroy all decency. A worshipper of the true God cannot join, in natural religion, with the worshipper of idols: and yet, every little difference in sentiment is not sufficient ground to divide us. See Gen. xiv. 18, 22. and xxi. 22. 31. And does not the New Testament teach us, that where
persons

persons would be united in christian worship, they must so far agree in their religion, as to make a credible profession of their being sincere disciples of Christ, and must make known their agreement in all the necessary principles of christianity. It is not proper in this place to debate how many christian doctrines are absolutely necessary to make a true christian. They are generally described such as worship God, through Jesus Christ, and profess that faith which worketh by love. James ii. 17, 18. Matth. iii. 8.

Although there are and will be some lesser difficulties in sentiment among christians, yet the New Testament teaches, that they may all live in the same christian society. Rom. xvi. 2.—xv. 2.—xiv. 1.—iii. 4, 5.

The light of reason teaches, that there must be a mutual agreement amongst such persons as profess the same religion, to walk according to its dictates, as well as to meet at *certain seasons*, and at a *certain place*. Without such an agreement as to time and place, a company of men cannot meet for any purpose whatsoever either civil or religious. When revelation has not determined the precise time and particular place for this purpose, it must be concerted and agreed by those who are united in such a society, *nor has one person power to impose his will and humour upon the rest*. The acts of religion must be all free and voluntary.

Now what faith the New Testament in this case? If this union or mutual agreement, be not expressed so plainly in scripture as some persons might expect, it is because the very nature of things makes this agreement so necessary to keep up any public religion, that it is not necessary for the scriptures to be more express upon it; yet, they evidently imply it, Rom. xv. 7.—xvi. 2.—xiv. 1. As for the place of worship, there is none appointed under the New Testament, John iv. 21. therefore some convenient place must be agreed upon by mutual consent. As to the time, it is confessed that we christians have not so express and particular prescriptions for the seasons of worship as the Jews enjoyed; neither as to their weekly sabbaths, nor other festivals; yet, there appears strong evidence from sacred history, that the first day of the week was the usual season of public christian worship, Acts ii. 1. 4. 41.—xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. Rev. xx. And that they should agree to come to worship at the same time and place is evident, from 1 Cor. xi. 20. 33.—xiv. 23.

4. Common reason directs every religious society to receive in new members, that there may be a continuance of this religion in the world. And the light of nature, or reason and common prudence, teach us also, that this religious society may cast improper persons out of their fellowship; that they may not infect others, and dishonour their religion. And does not the New Testament represent to us the christian churches receiving new members on their profession of christianity? Acts ii. 41, 47. And does not the apostle teach the churches to take care that they keep pure, by casting out disorderly walkers? 2 Thess. iii. 16. 1 Cor. v. 5, 11, 13. 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. and 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18.

Reason and christianity join in receiving penitent offenders, 2 Cor. ii. 7, 8, 9.

5. It is evident to common reason, when such a voluntary religious society is constituted, *the right of* receiving or casting out members, or restoring them upon repentance, lies *originally* in the society itself; because the society itself, is founded, and subsists by the mutual compact of its own members; and whatsoever qualifications are required of persons, in order to become members of this body, it is *the society itself* that has an *original* right to judge, whether the persons have these qualifications or not. It was upon the acknowledgment of such qualifications expressed or implied, that this society was first founded, and as a voluntary society, it must be maintained on the same fact; otherwise new members will likely be admitted and imposed upon them, to the great dislike and injury of the society. Indeed they may depute the seniors in a society to act for them, or one particular person to act as president in all their affairs; *but they should never renounce their own original right.* And does not the New Testament generally give directions agreeable to this dictate of the light of nature? Does not St. Paul give *to the churches themselves* his apostolic advices about receiving, casting out, or restoring members? See Rom. i. 7.—xiv. 1.—xv. 7.—xvi. 2. 1 Cor. v. 4, 13. 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 8, 10. It is granted indeed, when proper officers are chosen and fixed among them, it is by their ministration and advice, christian churches exercise discipline. Rev. ii. iii. But whose work is such as eminently concerns the people themselves, and not the pastors only. It is also granted, that many times churches do commit the whole care of this matter into the hands of their ministers,

ministers, as being usually fittest to judge of the profession made ; but it ought never to be *so* entirely given into their hands, as to renounce the people's right of judging in these affairs. Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence among them, assumed to himself the right of *receiving*, and *casting out* members from the church ; but he was severely reproved for his pride and usurpation, when he forbade his fellow-christians to value brethren who were worthy, 3 John 9. 10. Ministers may happen to prove so injudicious, or so negligent of inquiry into the profession and qualifications of persons to be admitted, so subject to prejudices, or so engaged in a party quarrel, as to fill the church with such members as may be very contrary to the sentiments of the majority of the church ; and *if the people renounce their own right in this affair, they may thank themselves for such unnecessary consequences.*

I would also add, that if the people entirely give up the right of admission and exclusion to the minister alone, they can never cast the minister himself out, if he be never so impious or immoral.

Having found the constitution of a christian church to be so conformable to the dictates of right reason, let us consider whether the New Testament and the light of reason agree as to the acts of worship, and the manner of them ?

Doth not the light of nature direct us to adore God—to unite in acknowledgment of our sins—prayer for blessings wanted—and praise for mercies received—to seek continually for a further acquaintance with his will—and to provide some means for the instruction of the ignorant ? And does not the New Testament set all these plainly and frequently before us ? Do not most of the epistles, especially those to the Corinthians, fully shew the acts of christian worship and the manner of them ? Since there ought to be such public ministrations as these performed, our own reason and observation of mankind sufficiently inform us, that all persons are not capable of leading these public religious services, viz. they are not all fit to speak usefully in the name of God, in prayer and praise, or to treat of the things of God to others in a profitable and becoming manner. Reason itself therefore directs us, that there should be one or more persons chosen in every religious assembly, who should be wise, and prudent, grave, sober, and faithful ; and better skilled in the things of religion than others:

and who should be able in a more clear and happy manner to express them, that he, or they may go before a congregation, and lead them in their several acts of worship; that they may give instructions to the rest, and with their lips offer up their common address to God.

If it be inquired, what the light of reason directs about the investiture of such a person in this office? I know of nothing more, but that the people should make all due inquiry concerning his qualifications; that they should ask the opinion and advice of other teachers, where it can be conveniently obtained; that when they have sufficient experience of his abilities and virtues, they should agree to choose him to his office; and that he himself shall solemnly accept of it, and devote or give up himself to it. According to the light of nature and reason, no man should be made a teacher, or president, or leader in any voluntary religious society, but by the consent and agreement of that society, who put themselves under his instruction and care. No civil powers have the authority, by the law of nature, in these matters of religion and conscience; nor can any man or officer in any society, without his own free consent.

Let us now see what the New Testament directs in this point.—It is sufficiently evident, that scripture hath appointed such a set of men or officers in the christian church. We find their names and titles frequently mentioned, as pastors, teachers, elders, bishops, shepherds. Their duties are spoken of—their characters described—their support provided for—their people's duty to them enjoined—and since the church is to continue to the end of time, it is plain there must be always such persons to minister in holy things in every age.

In the very primitive times there was a great variety of talents and capacities for the ministrations of christian worship, conferred by inspiration, upon those who embraced the religion of Christ. These were taught of God in a more immediate manner, and where these extraordinary gifts were numerous, either they needed no other preachers, teachers, or ministers; or at least they were not yet furnished with particular officers, being then but in an infant state, as to any regular order. Such was the Corinthian church; and where any apostle or evangelist was present, he is reasonably supposed to preside; or in his absence he sometimes gives direction for their conduct as *though he were present*, 1 Cor. v. 3, 4.

(To be continued.)

The following Remarks are extracted from a Manuscript, which was written three years ago, but never before appeared in print. The Author's name would add considerable weight to what he has written, but I am not at liberty to publish it now.

SPEAKING of Mr. Wesley, he says, " His tenderness, his fatherly affection to his people, and watchful care over their interests, were strongly marked through the whole tenor of his conduct. His ears were always open to the complaints of every one, whether they were made against preachers, stewards, class-leaders, or wealthy members of the society; and in most cases the injured person was sure to have redress; the people in general considered his government as the best security of their most valuable privileges, and as a source of many comforts. There were, however, some things in Mr. Wesley's government, which ought to be deemed radical evils. They have already had, and still continue to have the most pernicious influence on the minds of the preachers; and whatever injures or weakens the integrity, the simplicity, and the piety of the preachers, must be eventually injurious to the people. One thing alluded to, was, his assuming the charge and direction of the *temporal affairs* of the societies. This was not within the sphere of his office, as a minister of the gospel. To condemn it all together, it is sufficient to say, that the apostles refused this charge; and it is contrary to the practice of the first christian ministers. And though he did not take this charge upon him from a principle of covetousness, yet, we are persuaded, his usefulness to the people was obstructed by it. On many occasions, temporal affairs have occupied so much of his time, and so deeply engaged his attention, that he has, not unfrequently gone into the pulpit in a state of mind neither comfortable to himself, nor profitable to the congregation. These effects have been much greater on the minds of the preachers in general, who have neither Mr. Wesley's wisdom, his long habits of close reflection, his disinterested charity, nor his firmness of mind.

“ Mr. *Wesley* long wished to meet with a person whom he could introduce to all the societies, initiate into the principles of his government, and leave behind him as a successor. He fixed upon Mr. *Fletcher*, and strongly solicited him to come out as an itinerant, with this view. But Mr. *Fletcher* was too well acquainted with the difficulties of the undertaking, to disquiet and harass his mind by so fruitless an attempt, and therefore refused. Some have supposed Dr. *Coke* was intended for that situation; but it does not appear Mr. *Wesley* ever designed he should. The Doctor, however, is charged with forming the plan of the *Deed of Declaration*, which constituted one hundred preachers the conference, throwing out all the rest; and fifty of these being assembled at a time and place appointed, are able to act, and make laws that shall be binding to all the preachers and people.

“ As Mr. *Wesley* advanced in years, he became less capable of long-continued exertions of mind: and at the same time, the affairs he had to manage, became more numerous and serious, from the great increase of preachers, and of the societies. He therefore chose five or six of the preachers, whom he formed into a kind of privy council, to assist him, and take off part of his labours. This is good evidence that Mr. *Wesley* did not intend Dr. C— should ever fill up his place after his death. At the yearly conference, those preachers, with Mr. *Wesley*, formed a secret committee, in which the principal business was arranged, and the most important matters determined, before they were proposed to the body of preachers assembled. He also allowed the preachers, at least one day, to settle the temporal affairs, without intermeddling much with them; only he always kept a watchful eye over the preachers fund, which he never would suffer to be much increased. We have often blamed him on this account, but since his death we have admired his prudence on this head. In proportion as Mr. *Wesley's* strength diminished, the influence of his privy council increased, and at length, his power was little more than nominal: so that we have some ground to say, that most of the alterations which have taken place since the beginning of the year 1784, have been owing to their influence, rather than the voluntary deliberate acts of Mr. *Wesley*. The chief of those was the *Deed of Declaration*, or *Deed of Conference*, as some persons

persons call it, and the ordinations which soon afterwards took place.

“The government of the Methodist societies begun now to suffer a change in the mode of administration. The change was still greater after the death of Mr. *Wesley*, which happened in March, 1791. Dr. C— was then in *America*, but one of his friends in the connexion immediately transmitted him an account of the event, that he might not fail to be present at the ensuing conference. Some of the old preachers suspected the Doctor's views; nor were they without apprehensions of the same kind concerning Mr. M——r. Perhaps they might fear an union between them; they, therefore, held several meetings in Yorkshire, to fix on some plan to be proposed. They shewed such determination to resist the influence of individuals, that neither Dr. *Coke* nor Mr. *Mather* took any steps to confirm their suspicions.

“The conference was held at Manchester, the last week in July, according to appointment, and a president was elected, as the deed, constituting conference, directs. This was a trial of strength between the parties; and a lay-preacher being chosen, completely prevented the views and expectations of Dr. C— and his friends. As Mr. *Wesley* was now dead, who had been the head and centre of union amongst the preachers, and as disagreeable innovations might probably be introduced, the London, and many other large societies, thought proper to send letters to the conference, expressing, in general and respectable terms, the opinion of the people respecting the plan which might be pursued. Many of the preachers appeared to have considered Mr. *Wesley's* death, as a favourable crisis to Methodism, often expressing in their letters, “There is now no King in Israel.” Being assembled in conference, they appear to have considered themselves as sole masters of the whole, and imagined deliberation with the people to be perfectly unnecessary; and their destroying the addresses they received, without perusing them, to put the best construction we can upon their motives, was treating the people with contempt. They saw, at the same time, with an eagle's eye, the alteration Mr. *Wesley's* death had made in the connexion, with respect to themselves, and forgot that it also affected the body. Accustomed, by his influence, to govern a community, who had a most implicit and well-

well-grounded confidence in his designs and measures, they unhappily imagined that *their* influence would be equal to his. On this ground we can only account for most of their proceedings. To rule without permitting the body to deliberate, appears to have been a maxim on which the conference rested their first proceedings upon. Hence, in the first instance, they rejected all interference on the part of the people, and erected themselves into a supreme legislative body; assuming the absolute power of making laws, which shall be binding on all the preachers, itinerant and local, and on all the people through all the Methodist societies; although many of the preachers, and all the people, are without any voice, and without any representatives in the conference. But they did not stop here; for who knows where to stop in fixing the limits of his own authority, when he imagines he only has the power of doing it? They next made themselves a supreme court of judicature, where all differences between the itinerant and local preachers, and between the itinerants and people, shall be finally decided, without an appeal. Here then, we see, they are parties in the cause, and judge and jury in the trial. As every member in the conference is laid under some kind of obligation, not to reveal what passes among them, (whether by oath or solemn promise, we know not) their method of proceeding gives them the fullest opportunity of being always in the right, of justifying one another, and of proving their opponents in the wrong; and also of cutting off, under the most plausible pretences they can invent, any preacher or member of society, who resists their usurped authority; of which they are extremely jealous and suspicious.

"The conference must be "*absolute masters*," says their first president, in a letter to a preacher. That is, must have the sole disposal of all the chapels in the three kingdoms; of collections every where made; of all the offices held in the society, and the influence connected with them; and of all the religious rights and privileges of the preachers and people. Wonderful! and almost incredible, did we not hear them with our own ears, assert these claims; and see them with our own eyes, act accordingly. This is surely a new thing in the world, which Solomon, with all his wisdom, could not foresee. A company of lay-men, taken from their trades, and cherished and fed by the people,

ple, on account of their supposed simplicity, piety, and zeal to do good, combine together, invade the rights of their brethren, and assume a more absolute authority than ever was attempted by the most arbitrary *priest* in any protestant church. What can be more astonishing? and will any one say that these men, who make themselves judge and jury in their own cause, will ever do an act of justice to the prejudice of their own usurped authority?

“ We know not that the conference ever published any reason for this extraordinary assumption of power. Perhaps the preachers thought that the people had such implicit confidence in them, that they would resign up all their rights and privileges without a struggle. This might possibly have been the case, had the preachers exercised their new and assumed powers with moderation. But as we develop their plans, and delineate their conduct, the contrary will appear. When the people belonging to one of the first chapels in the connexion, soon afterwards, claimed the right of chusing their own stewards and auditors of accounts, and of managing their own temporal concerns, the preachers violently opposed them. The chief reason alledged for their opposition was, that the preachers, being Mr. *Wesley's* sons in the gospel, they succeeded to all the rights, privileges, and powers, which he possessed in the government of the societies. An assistant said, he would sacrifice half the society, or he would carry his point. Another preacher declared, “ This right-hand shall rot off from my shoulder, before I will give up any right of the conference.” O true shepherds of the flock of Christ! who never contended for temporal dominion, nor authorized his disciples to do so. It is probable, however, that the conference acted on this false principle; that is, That they, as Mr. *Wesley's* sons in the gospel, succeeded to all the rights, privileges, and powers which he possessed. We have already traced the origin of Mr. *Wesley's* power, in matters of discipline; we have stated as a fact, that his interference in the temporal affairs of the societies, frequently hindered his usefulness; and that the preachers have been hurt by it in a much greater degree. Mr. *Wesley's* motive for continuing to manage temporal things was good; he thought the poor would, by that means, be better provided for, as the collections would be larger. Many of the people saw it as an evil in several respects;

respects; but they knew the goodness of his motive; they loved him as a father; had the fullest confidence in his known wisdom and integrity; and, being unwilling to grieve or offend him, they permitted him to do every thing he thought best. But this gave him no right but what was founded on the will of the people. Indeed, Mr. *Wesley* never claimed any right to the power which he exercised, but what was purely personal; he being the person who, under God, had raised the societies—formed their plan of discipline—and, from the incapacities of the people in their infant state, had gradually grown up into the authority and power which he possessed. These were the grounds on which he founded his claim to power, over the preachers and people. But the notion of transferring his right to others after his death, never entered into his head. The claims, therefore, set up by the conference, of inheriting from Mr. *Wesley*, what could not be transferred, is idle, absurd, and founded in a spirit of usurpation.

“ But let us set the matter in another point of view. Let us suppose a parallel case, in which temporal things are only concerned; and then some, perhaps, may see more clearly the injustice of their claim:—

“ There was an infant which had large possessions in England, Ireland, and Scotland; a gentleman undertook to be his governor, and engaged not only to instruct him, but also to manage his temporal affairs. When the young man came of age, the governor took no notice of the circumstance, but continued to exercise the same authority as before. The young man had seen so many proofs of his wisdom, integrity, diligence, and zeal, that he loved him as a father, and permitted him to direct every thing, without the least interruption. Under the prudent and diligent management of the governor, the possessions had greatly increased, so that he had already employed a great number of persons to assist him in different places, in the management of them. These persons he treated with kindness, calling them his children, and they acted under his immediate direction, and were accountable to him alone. The possessions continued to increase till the governor had more than one hundred persons in his employment. At length the governor died, being a very old man; when his sons formed a combination, and
claimed

claimed the right of managing the gentleman's affairs, without being accountable to any one, as an inheritance descended to them from their father; asserting that they succeeded to all the rights, powers, and privileges, in the government of the gentleman's estates, which their father had enjoyed.——We leave every man of common sense to judge upon the justness of their claim—and also to apply the subject to the affairs of our connexion.

“ The conference having now the uncontrolled power of making laws for the whole connexion, and of deciding upon all controversies between themselves, the local preachers and people, and having the absolute disposal of all monies collected for various purposes, and the patronage of all places of trust, &c. in the societies, it is manifest that the government was changed. The monarchical form of it was lost, and it was now founded on the principles of an aristocracy. This is the worst form of government that can exist. The people are mere slaves, having no voice in the making of those laws by which they are to be governed, nor in the decision of those causes in which their dearest interests are involved. This appears to be the present situation of the members of the Methodist societies. General regulations are made without consulting the sense, or the situations of the people; and though absurd and oppressive when applied to individuals, they are exercised with a degree of rigor, unknown in the days of Mr. Wesley. If any one has courage to complain, he is immediately marked as a disaffected man—an enemy to the preachers—the itinerant plan—and to Methodism itself. His character is at the mercy of the preachers, and their conduct, in many instances, has abundantly evinced, that their *tender mercies are cruel*. But let us suppose, what we understand has actually happened, that a local preacher, a trustee or leader, in the society, is suspected to be unfriendly to the uncontrolled authority of the preachers, and that he is either deprived of his office, or embarrassed in the execution of it; that he is calumniated, and every artifice is made use of to prejudice the people against him, and to render him, not only useless, but odious. Now let us inquire what mode of redress the preachers have left to any person so circumstanced? They have divided England into eighteen districts; Scotland into two; and Ireland into five. Each of these districts contains

tains several circuits. The preachers of a district are to be summoned to meet, at a time and place appointed, on any case of emergency, concerning which it is too difficult or it is too important for an assistant of any circuit within its limits to determine alone. This meeting is called a committee of the district, and a chairman is chosen at conference. "Their decision shall be final, till the meeting of next conference, when the chairman of the committee shall lay the minutes of their proceedings before the conference. Provided, nevertheless, that nothing shall be done by any committee, contrary to the resolutions of the conference."—Min. 1791, Page 16. Under Mr. *Wesley's* government, all appeals, between the sitting of conference, were made to him; he often had the parties face to face, and he only had the power to decide without any further appeal. He had the feelings of a common father of the preachers and people: he stood as a middle person between them, and formed a barrier against the encroachments of the first, or the privileges of the latter. Mr. *Wesley* knew the preachers were liable to the common snares of humanity, and that ambition, honour, and their desire of getting money (either by marriage or other means) might hurt, if not ruin them. He also saw the unsuspected confidence the people had in them. He, therefore, opposed them in these things, by all the authority he had; as these attempts were utterly contrary to the original principles on which they left their trades, and went out as Methodist preachers. He foresaw, that in proportion as they succeeded, they would lose their simplicity, their piety, and their integrity, and the work in which he and they engaged, be injured, if not ruined. It was on this account that he so earnestly desired to find a proper person whom he could introduce to all the societies, and whom the people might invest, at his death, with all those powers in the management of our affairs which he had possessed. He thought this better for the people than an aristocratical government, under the absolute dominion of the preachers.

"While Mr. *Wesley* lived, and had the supreme direction of affairs in the society, no man, no body of men, were made judges in their own causes, *without any appeal*. He would have blushed at such a solemn mockery of the *very forms of common justice*. How different is the conduct of the preachers, and the state of the people at present!

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The district committees are composed of *preachers only*; and their decision on the affairs that come before them are final, till the next meeting of conference. Here, then, we see, that the preacher or preachers may be the aggressors in any difference, and have done the injury complained of, and yet be members of the committee; they are allowed to represent their own case in any way they please, without being confronted with the opposite party, and to sit as judges in their own cause, while the injured person, or persons, are wholly excluded! If it be a matter which concerns the power or wealth of the preachers, it is a common cause; every member of the committee is a party concerned, and yet, collectively, "Their decision shall be final, till the meeting of next conference." When the matter comes before the conference the case is just the same. Every member of it is a party concerned, and a judge in his own cause; while the injured persons have no means of giving a fair representation of the case, nor of obtaining any redress. Can imagination invent a more tyrannical mode of government than this? What would Mr. *Wesley* have said to these things, had he lived to have seen them?

"Having adopted this principle, "The conference must be absolute masters," it was thought necessary to prevent every preacher in the connexion from enjoying any privileges, or exercising any powers in the societies, but what were derived from the sole will and pleasure of the conference, and expressly delegated by that body. This rule was a direct violation of Mr. *Wesley's* will, and was made with an intent to set it aside. The Deed of Trust of the New Chapel, City-Road, *London*, had invested Mr. *Wesley* with a power of nominating eight persons, who, by virtue of his nomination, should have a right to preach in the said chapel after his death. He accordingly nominated eight lay-preachers in his will, besides four clergymen, who now held their right to preach in the chapel, not from the conference, but from the will of Mr. *Wesley*. In like manner the Deed of Trust of the chapel at *Bath*, had authorized Mr. *Wesley* to nominate a certain number of preachers for the said chapel, after his death, and to constitute them a committee to appoint other preachers to officiate there, as they might think proper. These preachers also held their power in the chapel at Bath from Mr.

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Wesley's will, and not from the conference. A Deed of Trust, and the will of a deceased person are constantly held sacred by all honest men, where there is no breach of a previous contract, a known law, or rule of equity. But nothing was sacred in the eyes of the Manchester conference, which stood in the way of their views of absolute authority. These privileged preachers were therefore called upon to make a formal resignation of all rights, powers, and privileges, held in the society under Mr. *Wesley's* will, and to exercise no power but what the conference delegated to them. This they accordingly did; and we understand their resignation is registered in the book, containing the large minutes of the conference.

“ The plan which the preachers had formed for their own aggrandizement, was bold and extensive. It was not confined to the exclusive privilege of making laws for the whole body of the people and many of the preachers, without their consent; and of determining all controversies without an appeal; but it even reached to the acquisition of considerable property, independent of the collections annually brought to the conference. Mr. *Wesley's* writings, and his extracts from authors, were very numerous. Besides the hymns, sermons, a commentary upon the Old and New Testament, various pieces of controversy, &c. they included grammar, logic, history, biography, and natural philosophy. He also published the *Arminian Magazine*, of which he printed above six thousand every month, and the sale is now increased to above eight thousand. He made every assistant a travelling bookseller, allowing him ten per cent. upon what he sold; in the language of tradesmen, therefore, it may be said, that Mr. *Wesley* had near one hundred riders, dispersed through the three kingdoms, pushing the sale of his books among various classes of people, over whom they had great influence. A trade so extensive required a large stock, and the means of a constant supply. His stock was generally worth to him, or to any other person who had the same means of disposing of it, about eight, or sometimes ten thousand pounds. To keep up this in the most advantageous way, Mr. *Wesley* had a printing office for his own use. Here, having purchased every thing necessary to carry on the printing business, he placed a printer, as a kind of foreman, to manage it for him. He allowed another per-
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son a yearly stipend for correcting the press, &c. and his paper being purchased in large quantities, and on the best terms, he secured to himself nearly the profits of a printer, in a pretty large way of business. We have already observed, that the sale of books was very extensive, and that he allowed only ten per cent. for selling, so that his own advantage must have been very considerable. In Mr. Wesley's opinion, two important points were gained by the extensive circulation of his works, and the profitable manner of doing it. A great number of people were led into the habit of reading, which must tend to improve their minds; and he acquired a large yearly income, which, as he gave it all away, enabled him to do more good to the poor and indigent. But whatever may be said of the advantages, we are persuaded, that several evils have arisen from introducing among many of the preachers, a covetous spirit of trade, with its usual concomitants.

"Mr. Wesley's stock of books was his private property. He was therefore obliged to dispose of it by his will, or the next of kin would have claimed it. He knew well the weakness of human nature; and frequent observation had taught him, that men, whose situation and early habits in life had placed them beyond any prospects of becoming rich, seldom attain any sudden accession of wealth without being greatly injured in their religious interests, if not wholly ruined by it. The whole of his conduct towards the

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preachers,

* Many assistant preachers have a considerable addition to their allowance by the sale of books. In the large circuits it often amounts to ten pounds, or more, every year. It frequently happens, that the other preachers, though they help to carry magazines, &c. to the places where they preach, yet they have no share in the profits of selling; not so much as any reduction in the price of a book, should they purchase any that are sold in the connexion. While the assistant takes every method that can be devised to engage the people to buy our books, his colleagues having no advantage by them, have therefore no particular motive of this kind to recommend them. It has often happened, that many of them have been exceedingly grieved, when they have heard of the methods which their superintendants have taken, to engage poor people to buy books which are by no means suitable to their capacities or situation. It cannot be supposed, while an assistant preacher monopolizes all the benefits which arise from the sale of books, (though his colleagues may be in circumstances far inferior to him) that every step will be taken on this head, which tends to the furtherance of the gospel amongst us.

A. K.

preachers, and their fund, fully demonstrates that he thought no greater evil could happen to the Methodist connexion, than that of the preachers becoming rich, and too powerful. And will any of the present admirers of the preachers pretend to know the true interests of the connexion better than Mr. *Wesley* knew them? Influenced by these views, Mr. *Wesley* did not chuse to leave his books to the conference, who had the means of raising from them (including the magazine) a profit of about two thousand pounds every year. [Upon a fair calculation, the profits cannot be much less than three thousand now.] He was desirous, however, that the sale of the books should be continued, and the profits applied to the use and benefit of the conference, and the work at large. The more effectually to secure this purpose, he determined to place them in the hands of trustees, and as they were personal property, he could do this by his will, without a deed of trust. He made his will, and appointed three of the most respectable persons in the connexion, for property, integrity, and attachment to Methodism, to be his executors. To these he gave all his books on sale, to hold in trust for the conference.

“ Dr. C——, full of imaginary schemes, which generally ended in confusion and discord, was often besieging Mr. *Wesley*, and using every possible means to make him adopt them. He was not displeased with the notion of a trust, but with the nomination of the trustees, he being left out. He therefore persuaded Mr. *Wesley*, that it would be more safe and certain, to make a deed of trust separate from the will, and to increase the number of trustees. He continued to tease the old gentleman, who wished to be quiet, till he consented. A deed was made according to the wishes of Dr. C—— and several of the preachers, which Mr. *Wesley* signed the October before he died; the contents of which, it is highly probable, he did not know. For, as he most cordially disliked the language of the law, and was at the same time so weak that, if he sat still five minutes without being employed, and without conversation, he fell asleep; it is very probable he did not hear the deed read.

“ This was a very unjust transaction. Few, or none of the preachers knew any thing about the deed of trust. The executors were not named in it as trustees. It, therefore,

fore, counteracted the will, and tended to produce division and confusion. Dr. *Coke* was one of the trustees, and the others were all preachers. The deed gave them all Mr. *Wesley's* books and pamphlets to hold in trust, the profits of which were to be applied to the use and benefit of conference, in the way the trustees thought proper. This was artfully put into the deed. The Doctor, it seems, expected to acquire all the influence and patronage among the preachers, which the whole revenue of the book-room could give him."

From this account we clearly perceive the power and influence which the preachers soon acquired, after the death of Mr. *Wesley*. Dr. *Coke*, and the other trustees of the deed, gave up the books into the hands of the whole conference, which from that time have been considered as belonging to the body of preachers.—As our worthy friend has brought the subject no farther, it is probable, either he, or some other correspondent, will favour us with further thoughts upon it, in the course of a few months.

A. K. 

Though the principal design of this publication is to give our readers suitable views of religious liberty in general, and particularly to describe the state of the Methodist connexion, with the evils that threaten its ruin, and to point out an effectual remedy, if seasonably applied; yet we by no means design to prevent useful pieces from circulating in the Monitor, on experimental and practical religion. It is our earnest desire, that all who read this work, may be so far influenced by the grace of God, as to pursue the one thing needful with their whole heart. Controversy, when sanctified by the blessing of God, may be attended with lasting good to our minds. But we are sure that an experimental knowledge of God, by Christ Jesus, and a conversation according to the gospel, will ever yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to our minds.

The following extract is taken from Mr. Fletcher's Second Check to Antinomianism. It is eminently calculated, under the blessing of God, to stir up our minds, to give diligence to make our calling and election sure. Mr. Fletcher's extraordinary piety, and the holiness of his conduct before all, cause his memory to be precious to thousands in our connexion. May we all follow him, as he followed Jesus Christ!

An Extract on Practical Christianity, from Mr. Fletcher's Second Check to Antinomianism.

FEW of us know what it is to cry out of the deep, to pray and believe, till, in the name of Jesus, we force our way beyond flesh and blood—come within the reach of the internal world—conflict in an agony with the powers of darkness—vanquish Apollyon in all his attacks—and continue wrestling till the day of eternity breaks upon us, and the God of Jacob bless us with all spiritual benedictions in heavenly places. John Bunyan's Pilgrim, the old Puritans, and the first Quakers had such engagements, and gained such victories; but they soon got over the edge of internal activity, into the smooth, easy path of Laodicean formality. Most of us called Methodists, have already followed them; and when we are in that snare Satan scorns to conflict with us, puny flesh and blood are more than a match for us. We fall asleep under their bewitching power, and begin to dream strange dreams: "Our salvation is finished, we are got above legality, we live without frames and feelings, we have attained christian liberty, we are perfect in Christ, we have nothing to do, our covenant is sure, &c." True! But unhappily it is a covenant with the flesh: Satan, who is too wise to break it by rousing us in the spirit, leaves us to our delusion; and we think ourselves in the kingdom of God, when we are only in a fool's paradise.

At midnight I will rise and praise thee, said once a pious Jew; but we pious christians, who enjoy both health and strength, are imprisoned within our bed-curtains long after the sun has called the diligent to their labour. When the fear of the Lord was in us—the beginning of wisdom, we durst not so confer with flesh and blood. We had then
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a little faith; and so far as it went, it shewed itself by our works. Then we could, without hesitation, and from our hearts pray, Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people, that they plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may be by thee plenteously rewarded, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Col. for the last Sunday in Trinity. We believe there was some truth in those words of our Lord: Except a man forsake all that he hath, deny himself, and take up his cross daily, he cannot be my disciple. He that will save his life shall lose it, and he that will lose his life, for my sake, shall find it. If thine eye offend thee pluck it out: It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire. Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for I say unto you, That many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able, because they will seek to enter in at the wide, rather than at the strait gate; the Antinomian or Pharisaic, rather than the evangelically legal gate of salvation. But now, “We know better, say some of us, we have got over our scruples and legality;” we can conform to this present world; cleave to, instead of forsaking all that we have, and even grasp what we have not! What a strange way this of growing in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ crucified.

Daniel informs us, that he made his petition three times; and David, that he offered up his praises seven times a day. Once also, like them, we had fixed hours for private prayer and self-examination, for reading the scriptures, and meditating upon them, perhaps upon our knees; but we thought this was legality too, and under the specious pretence of going beyond forms, and learning to pray always, we first threw away our form, and soon after our endeavours to watch unto prayer: Now we scarce ever, for any length of time, solemnly bend the knee before our Father who sees in secret. And, instead of leaning on Christ’s bosom in all the means of grace, we take our graceless rest on the bosom of that painted Jezebel—formality.

If we are backward in performing that leading work of piety, secret prayer, is it a wonder, if, in general, we are averse to every work of mercy, that costs us something besides a little of our superfluous money? And would to God some did not even grudge this, when it is pressed out of
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their purse, by the importunate addresses of those who beg for the poor! However, we give yet at the door of a church, or at the communion; whether with indifference or joy, whether out of custom, shame, or love, we seldom examine. But that important branch of St. James's pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father, which consists in visiting the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, is with many almost as much out of date, as a pilgrimage to our Lady of Loretto.

O ye forsaken sons of poverty, and ancient daughters of sorrow, who pine away in your desolate garrets or cellars, without fire in winter, destitute of food, physic, or nurse in sickness, raise a moment your emaciated bodies, wrapt up in thread-bare blankets, if you are possessed of any such a covering, and tell me, tell the world, how many of our gay professors of religion have sought and found you out in your deplorable circumstances! How many are come to visit in you, or worship with you, the Man of Sorrow, who once lay on the cold ground in a bloody sweat? When did they make your bed in your sickness? When have they kindly inquired into all your wants, sympathized in all your temptations, supported your drooping heads in a fainting fit, revived your sinking spirits with suitable cordials, gently wiped your cold sweats, or mixed them with their tears of pity?

Alas! you sometimes find more compassion and assistance in your extremity, from those who never name the name of Christ, than from our easy Antinomian, Laodicean believers. Their wants are richly supplied, that is enough: They do not inquire into yours, and you are ashamed or afraid to trouble them with the dismal story. Nor, indeed, would some of them understand you if you did; their uninterrupted abundance makes them as incapable of feeling for you, as the warm inhabitants of Ethiopia are to feel for the frozen Icelanders.

While the table of some believers (so called) is alternately loaded with a variety of delicate meats and rich wines, what have ye to sustain sinking nature? Alas! One can soon see your all of food and physic. A pitcher of water stands by your bedside upon a stool, the only piece of furniture left in your wretched apartment. The Lord God bless the poor widow that brought it you, with her two mites! Heaven reward a thousand-fold the loving creature
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that not only shares with you, but freely bestows upon you all her living, even all that she has, when they forget to inquire after you, and to send you something out of their luxurious abundance! The Son of Man, once forsaken by all the disciples, and comforted by an angel, make her bed in the time of sickness! and a waiting band of celestial spirits carry her charitable soul into Lazarus's bosom, in the awful hour of dissolution! I had rather be in her case, though she should not confidently profess the faith, than in yours, O ye caressed believers, who let your affluence overflow to those that have more need to learn frugality in the school of scarceness, than to receive bounties which feed their sensuality and indulge their pride.

And ye women professing godliness, who enjoy the comforts of health and abundance, in whose streets there is no complaining, no decay—whose daughters are as the polished corners of the temple, when did you ever want visitors? Alas! ye have too many for the good they do you, or that you do them. Does not your conversation, which begins with the love of Jesus, terminate in religious scandal, as naturally as your soul, which once began in the spirit, ends now in the flesh? O that your visitors were as ready to attend workhouses, jails, infirmaries and hospitals, as they are to wait upon you! O that, at least, like the Dorcases, the Phebes, and Priscillas of old, you would teach them cheerfully to work for the poor, to be free servants of the church, and tender nurses of the sick! O that they saw in you all, how the holy women, the widows who were widows indeed, formerly entertained strangers, washed the saints' feet, instructed the younger women, and continued night and day in prayer! But, alas! the love of many, once warm as the smoking flax, is waxed cold, instead of taking fire and flaming. They who once began to seek the profit of many, now seek their own ease or interest, their own honour or indulgence.

Almost all, when they come to the foot of the hill Difficulty, take their leave of Jesus as a guide, because he leads on through spiritual death to the regeneration. Some disliking that door, like thieves and robbers, climb up an easier way; and others, leaving the high-way of the cross, under the fair pretence that blind papists walk therein, make for themselves and others broad and downward roads, to ascend the steep hill of Zion.

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Those easy paths are innumerable, like the people that walk in them. O that my eyes, like David's, did run down like waters, because men, professing godliness, keep not God's law, and are even offended at it! Their mouth talketh of vanity, they dissemble with their double heart, and their right hand is a right hand of sloth or positive iniquity.

O that I had the tenderness of St. Paul, to tell you, even weeping, of those who mind earthly things; those who have sinned, and have not repented; those who, while they boast they are made free by the Son of God, are brought under the power of many things; whom foolish desires, absurd fears, undue attachments, imported superfluities, and disagreeable habits, keep in the most ridiculous bondage!

O that my head were waters, and my eyes fountains of tears, to deplore, with Jeremiah, the slain of the daughter of God's people, who live in pleasure, and are dead while they live! And to lament over spiritual Pharisees of every sort; those who say, Stand by, I am holier than thou; and those who fix the names of poor creature! blind! and carnal! upon every publican they see in the temple; and boldly placing themselves among the elect, thank God they are not as other men, and, in particular, as the reprobates!

Who can number the adulterers and adulteresses, who know not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God! The concealed idolaters, who have their chambers of imagery within, and set up their idols in their hearts! The envious Cains who carry murder in their breast! The profane Esaus, who give up their birth right for a sensual gratification; and covetous Judases, who sell the truth, which they should buy, and part with Christ for filthy lucre's sake! The sons of God, who look at the fair daughters of men, and take to themselves wives of all which they chuse! The gay Dinahs, who visit the daughters of the land, and come home polluted in body or in soul! The prophets of Bethel, who deceive the prophets of Judah, intice them out of the way of self-denial, and bring the roaring lion and death upon them! The fickle Marcusses, who depart when they should go to the work! The self-made prophets, who run before they are sent, and scatter instead of profiting the people! The spiritual Absaloms, who rise against their fathers in the gospel; and, in order to reign without them, raise a rebellion against them! The furious Zedekiahs, who make themselves

themselves horns of iron, to push the true servants of the Lord, because they will not prophecy smooth things and deceits, as they do!

Who can count the fretful Jonahs, who are angry to death when the worm of disappointment smites the gourd of their creature-happiness? The weak Aarons, who dare not resist a multitude, and are carried by the stream into the greatest of absurdities? The jealous Miriams, who rise against the ministers that God honours? The crafty Zibas, who calumniate and supplant their brethren? The treacherous Joabs, who kiss them, and get an opportunity of stabbing them under the fifth rib? The busy sons of Zeruah, who perpetually stir up resentment and wrath? The mischievous Doegs, who carry about poisonous scandal, and blow up the fire of discord? The hypocritical Gehazis, who look like saints before their masters and ministers, and yet can impudently lie, and impiously cheat? The Gibeonites, always busy in hewing wood and drawing water, in going through the drudgery of outward services, without ever aspiring at the adoption of sons? The halting Naamans, who serve the Lord, and bow to Rimmon. The backsliding Solomons, who once chose wisdom, but now pursue folly in her most extravagant and impious forms? The apostatizing Alexanders, who tread underfoot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing? And to include multitudes in one class, the Samaritans, who, by a common mixture of truth and error, of heavenly and earthly mindedness, worship the Lord, and serve other gods; are one day for God, and the next for mammon: Or the thousands in Israel who halt between two opinions, crying out when Elijah prevails, "The Lord he is God;" and when Jezebel triumphs, returning to the old song, "O Baal, save us! O trinity of the world—money, pleasures, and honour, makes us happy."

We shall finish this Number with a short Extract from Mr. Whitfield's Letters:—

"NO wonder that the enemy has been to sow tares of various kinds among the good seed. This always was, and, in all probability, will always be the case, till time shall be no more. Happy they! who are enabled to

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to distinguish between truth and error, and who, amongst the different sentiments of Christ's disciples, maintain catholic love for all. This is what I would aim at, because it is the glory of a christian, and a temper of mind which sweetly prepares us for the communion of saints in heaven.

"I am sorry to hear that there are yet disputes among us about brick-walls. I was in hopes, after our contests of that kind seven years ago, such a scene would never appear again; but I find fresh offences must come, to search out and discover to us fresh corruptions,—to try our faith—teach us to cease from man—and to lean more upon him, who by his infinite wisdom and power will cause, "that out of the eater shall come forth meat, and from the strong, sweetness.

"I would only caution thee against taking any thing for gospel upon the mere authority of Man. Go where thou wilt, though thou shouldst be in the purest society under heaven, thou wilt find, that the best of men are but men at the best, and will meet with stumbling-blocks enough, to teach thee the necessity of a continual dependance on the LORD JESUS, who alone is infallible, and who will not give that glory to another. Blessed be his name for the trials I have met with from the friends of Zion."

The EDITOR returns his sincere thanks to his numerous Friends, for the kindness they have shown, in becoming Subscribers for this Work. He hopes their expectation will not be disappointed; and that lasting good will be obtained by thousands, in reading the Monitor. He is particularly thankful for the valuable Pisces he has already received for insertion, and for the promise of help from so many respectable Friends. May their kindness be eternally rewarded!

As it is inconvenient to print six pages alone, this number contains forty-eight; the next will contain thirty-six, which will bring both the numbers, when united, to contain eighty-four, the pages proposed.

As we could not know exactly the number of Subscribers at this early period of the work, we have printed a sufficient number to supply any that may wish to become Subscribers, in the course of a few weeks.

No. II.

THE

Methodist Monitor.

“ When Power is once obtained, like sin, it blinds the understanding : ’tis to the possessor as the *apple of an eye*, and if wrested from him (to use Mr. *Wesley’s* expression on another occasion) it is parted with like *drops of blood*. When men contend for liberty, they mean *only their own liberty*, but when they exclaim against tyranny, they mean *the tyranny of others !*”

Nottingham Letter, 1795.

Essay on Liberty of Conscience.

(Continued from Page 8.)

TWO sorts of people are fond of multiplying deists; bigots, and deists themselves. Deists take the liberty of associating with themselves Confucius, Zoroaster, Socrates, and all the ancient philosophers. They first suppose that these philosophers would have rejected revelation, had it been proposed to them, and then they speak of them as if they had actually rejected it. But, if the gospel be not a system of absurdity, adapted to credulity, the probability is greater that they would have received, than that they would have rejected it; and if, as Lord Bolingbroke says, "it must be admitted, that Plato insinuates in many places, the want, or the necessity of a divine revelation, to discover the external service God requires, and the expiation for sin, and to give stronger assurances of the rewards and punishments, that await men in another world;" it becomes highly probable, that Plato would have embraced the christian revelation; and were the testimony of Jesus Christ

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admissible, it is absolutely certain, that *if the mighty works which were done in Judea, had been done among the heathens, many heathens would have repented of paganism in sackcloth and ashes, Mat. xi. 21, &c.* To the army of philosophers, they add all those christians, who do not understand, or who do not practise, the dictates of christianity. With this hypothetical reasoning they attack christianity, and boast of numbers, while all their votaries are so few that a child may write them. Bigots, who make scripture, and their sense of it, the same thing, practise the same pious fraud, and turn over all those to the deistical party, who do not allow their doctrines. Hence the popular notion of the multiplicity of deists.

From the charge of deism, first, the populace ought to be freed. Too many of them live without any religion. The religion of nature is as unknown to them as the religion of scripture. When they think of religion, their error is credulity, and their spiritual guides soon find, that the believing of too much, and not the believing of too little, is their mistake. They are wicked; but they are not deists; for the term deism, surely, stands for admitting the religion of nature, as well as for the renouncing of revelation. But of both, in general, they are alike ignorant.

They, who renounce popular doctrines, are not therefore deists. The learned and pious Dr. Bekker, one of the pastors at Amsterdam, renounced the popular opinion of the power of the devil, and published a book against it, in 1691. He seemed to doubt also of the eternity of hell-torments. He was reputed a deist, and the consistory, the classes, the synods proceeded against him, suspended him first from the communion, and deposed him at last from the office of a minister. Yet Dr. Bekker was a fast friend of revelation, and all his crime lay in expounding some literal passages of revelation allegorically. Not the book, but the received meaning of it he denied.

The deists ought not to claim them who affirm, that *it is not the property of the truths of revelation to square with philosophy.* Mons. Voltaire takes Pomponatius for a deist. Pomponatius denied the natural immortality of the soul; he affirmed, that it could not be proved by principles of philosophy: but he believed, and maintained, the immortality of the soul on the testimony of revelation. This

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learned Italian philosopher was persecuted by the monks ; his book, it is said, was burnt by the Venetians ; and the modern deists have adopted him : yet Pomponatius was a believer of revelation, and by believing the immortality of the soul on the testimony of scripture, he discovered the most profound veneration for it ; a deference exactly similar to that which trinitarians pay to its testimony concerning the nature of God.

What Pomponatius affirmed of the immortality of the soul, Bayle affirmed of *all the mysteries* of the gospel : but, we do not allow, that Bayle was therefore a deist. Thus he writes :—" If one of the apostles, St. Paul for instance, when among the Athenians, had besought the Areopagus to permit him to enter the lists against all philosophers ; had he offered to maintain a disputation upon the three persons, who are but one God ; and if, before he began the disputation, he had acknowledged the truth of the rules laid down by Aristotle in his logic, whether with regard to the terms of opposition, or the characteristics of the premises of a demonstrative syllogism, &c. lastly, if, after these preliminaries were well settled, he had answered, that our reason is too weak to ascend to the knowledge of the mysteries, in opposition to which objections were proposed to him ; in such a case, he would have suffered as much shame, as it is possible for a defeated opponent to meet with. The Athenian philosophers must have gained a compleat victory ; for he would have judged and condemned agreeable to the maxims, the truth of which he had acknowledged before. But had the philosophers employed those maxims in attacking him, after he had informed them of the foundation of his faith, he might have opposed the following barrier to them : that his doctrines were not within the cognizance of reason ; that they had been revealed by heaven ; and that mankind must believe them, though they could not comprehend them. The disputation, in order for its being carried on in a regular manner, must not have turned upon the following question, Whether these doctrines were repugnant to the rules of logic and metaphysics ? but on the question, Whether they have been revealed by heaven ? It would have been impossible for St. Paul to have been defeated, except it could have been proved to him, that God did not

require those things to be believed.”* This reasoning does not appear to favour deism; it seems to place the mysteries of christianity on their true base.

Neither are they to be reputed deists, who doubt, or deny, the inspiration of some books, which are usually accounted sacred. Luther denied the inspiration of the epistle of St. James; Grotius that of the Song of Solomon; and Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, denied that the Apocalypse was written by the Apostle John; yet none of these was a deist.

Nor ought the deists to claim those learned critics, who allow that the scriptures have undergone the fate of all other books, and who therefore expose and amend the errors of copyists; expunge interpolations; restore the mutilated passages; and deal with the writings of St. Paul, as they do with the writings of Thucydides. The chronology, the geography, the history, the learning of the bible, (if the expression be not improper) must necessarily submit to a critical investigation, and upright critics have self-evident rules of trial. The most severe pieces of criticism on revelation is, at the same time, one of the most excellent defences of it. One single rule, had it been thought worthy of that attention which it merits, would have spared the writing of many a folio, and have freed some christians from many a religious reverie†. Yet the author of this piece of criticism, the great Le Clerc, has been by some of his bigoted countrymen accounted a deist.

Finally, we cannot resign those brightest ornaments of the christian church, whose sense and grace will not allow them to be dogmatical, and who hesitate about some doctrines generally received by their own communities. The celebrated Philip Melancthon has been taxed with scepticism: but far be the imputation from him! “He was one of the wisest and best men of his age, (says a

* Gen. Dict. vol. x. Illustration upon the Manichees.

† Monf. Le Clerc expresses this rule thus: *Multa videri in versionibus emphorica, quæ in ipsis fontibus nullam emphasin habent.* Ars Crit. tom. i. p. 2. f. l. c. 4. This rule of interpretation, which regards the idiom of a language, deserves more attention, it should seem, than has been usually paid to it.

certain historian) he was of a sweet peaceful disposition, had a great deal of wit, had read much, and his knowledge was very extensive. The combination of such qualities natural and acquired, is ordinarily a foundation for diffidence. Melancthon was by no means free from doubts, and there were abundance of subjects, upon which he durst not pronounce. This is so, and it cannot be otherwise. He lived among a sect of people, who to him appeared passionate, and too eager to mix the arts of human policy, and the authority of the secular arm, with the affairs of the church. His tender conscience made him afraid that this might be a mark of reprobation. Although he drew up the Augsburg confession, yet he hated disputes in religion; and when his mother asked him how she should conduct her belief amidst so many controversies, Continue, answered he, to believe and pray as you have hitherto done, and let these wars of controversy give you no manner of trouble." This is the Melancthon who was suspected of deism!

Several more classes might be added to these: but these are sufficient to prove, that real deists are not by far so numerous as reputed ones. The cause of deism, unsupported by reason, may magnify its little all: but the cause of revelation has little to fear from the learning, less from the morality, and nothing from the number of its opponents.

When some atheists appeared in the Jewish church, and attacked the knowledge and worship of God, the people of God were intimidated: but, the Royal Psalmist justly observes, they were in great fear, where no fear was, Psalm liii. 5. Similar events have produced similar fears in the christian church, and to these honest, but ignorant fears we ascribe the much greater part of those pious frauds, with which christians have disgraced the cause of God. Most of the fathers, most of the church of Rome, and some protestant churches, have treated christianity like an old crazy palace, which requires props or supporters on every side; and they have manifested great injudiciousness in the choice of supporters. The gospel stands like a stately sturdy oak, defying the attack of every storm: but they, who had pitched their tent beneath its shade, heard a rustling among the leaves, trembled for the fate of the tree, and, to secure it, surrounded it

it with a plantation of oziers. To this ignorant timidity, and not to the base tricks of knavery, the fordid arts of a sorry avarice, or the barbarous pleasure of shedding human blood, we charitably attribute the greatest absurdities in the christian church.

These absurdities, however, have produced very bad effects, and they oblige us to own, that real christians have occasioned violent prejudices against christianity.

Some christians have endeavoured to support the cause of christianity by spurious books; some by juggling tricks, called miracles; some by the imposition of superstitious ceremonies; some by the propagation of absurd doctrines; some have pretended to explain it by a wretched philosophy; others have exposed it to derision under pretence of adorning it with allegory; some have pleaded for it by fines, and fires, and swords; others have incorporated it with civil interests; most have laid down false canons of interpretation, and have resembled that synod, which condemned the forementioned Dr. Bekker, because, "*he had explained the holy scriptures so as to make them contrary to the catechism, and particularly to the articles of faith, which he had himself subscribed.*" Above all, the loose lives of the professors of christianity, and particularly of some of the ministers of it, have *covered the daughters of Zion with a cloud, and have cast down from heaven upon the earth the beauty of Israel*, Lam. ii. 1.

Involve christianity in all the thick mists, surround it with all the phenomena, call a weak eye, or a wicked heart to contemplate it, and, without a spirit of prophecy, the discovery may be foretold; the observer will become a reasoner a philosopher
a DEIST.

These are the topics, and not the gospel itself, which most deists have attacked: but if we agree to exonerate christianity of all these incumbrances; what have deists to answer? Very few of them *have taken up the argument on its true grounds, and they who have, could not support it.*

When a Frenchman undertakes to attack christianity, the disputes of his countrymen afford him an ample supply; he borrows arms of every party of christians, he conquers popery with protestant weapons, opposes the visions of quietism with the subtleties of jansenism, the myf-
teries

teries of Janfenius with the laws of good fenfe, and, having defeated abfurdity, he vainly imagines, he has obtained a victory over christianity. English deifts have taken the fame method, and, as our country has the fame exceffes, they have an ample field of glory before them. Christianity has nothing to do with the errors of St. Auftin, or the dreams of Madam Bourignon: but it is founded on a few facts, the evidence of which can never be difproved. The knowledge of thefe is a perfervative againft deifm.

(End of the Preface to Vol. II.)

Preface to the first Edition of the third Volume.

I am ftruck with the idea of the different degrees of labour neceffary to two men, one of whom fhould conceive the project of difuniting chriftians, and the other that of cementing them together in mutual love. The firft need not trouble himfelf with ftudy, examination and argument; he would not be obliged either to divest himfelf of his own preposfeffions, or to expofe thofe of others; he need not fit whole nights and days either to examine coolly his own thefes, or impartially to weigh thofe of his opponents; let him only take popular prejudices, cover them with the f acred ftyle of fcripture, or conceal them under the impenetrable jargon of the fchools; let him animate them with party fpirit, call it religious zeal, and denounce judgments on all who do not believe the whole to be effential to falvation; and the work will be done. Such a man, methinks, refembles a light-heeled enemy tripping over a fpacious field, and fcattring as he goes the feeds of an endless number of weeds: while the man who adopts a contrary plan, muft be forced, like the patient prying weeder, to ftop and toil ftep by ftep, day after day, feeling many a pain, and fetching many a figh, to pull the noxious produce up.

Very early in life I was preposfeffed in favour of the following pofitions:—Christianity is a religion of divine original—a religion of divine original muft needs be a perfect religion, and answer all the ends for which it was revealed, without human additions.—The christian religion

gion hath undergone considerable alterations since the times of Jesus Christ and his apostles, and yet, Jesus Christ was then accounted the *finisher* as well as the *author of faith*, Heb. xii. 2.—The doctrines of revelation, as they lie in the inspired writings, differ much from the same doctrines, as they lie in the creeds of human composition.—The moral precepts, the positive institutes, and religious affections, which constitute the devotion of most modern christians, form a melancholy contrast to those which are described by the guides whom they profess to follow.—The light of nature, and that of revelation; the operations of right reason, the spirit of the first, and the influence of the Holy Ghost, the soul of the last; both proceeding from the same uniform Supreme Being, cannot be supposed to be destructive of each other, or, even in the least degree, to clash together.—The finest idea, that can be formed of the Supreme Being, is that of an infinite intelligence, always in harmony with itself; and, accordingly the best way of proving the truth of revelation is that of shewing the analogy of the plan of redemption to that of creation and providence.—Simplicity and majesty characterizes both nature and scripture; simplicity reduces those benefits, which are essential to the real happiness of man, to the size of all mankind; majesty makes a rich provision for the employment and super-added felicity of a few superior geniusses, who first improve themselves, and then felicitate their inferior brethren, by simplifying their own ideas, by refining and elevating those of their fellow-creatures, by so establishing a social intercourse, consolidating fraternal love, along with all the reciprocal ties, that unite mankind. — Men's ideas of objects essential to their happiness are neither so dissimilar, nor so numerous, as inattentive spectators are apt to suppose.—Variety of sentiment, which is the life of society, cannot be destructive of real religion.—Mere mental errors, if they be not intirely innocent in the account of the supreme Governor of mankind, cannot be, however, objects of blame and punishment among men.—Christianity could never be intended to destroy the just natural rights, or even to diminish the natural privileges of mankind.—That religion, which allows the just claims, and secures the social happiness of all mankind, must needs be a better religion than that, which provides for
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only a part at the expence of the rest.—God is more glorified by the good actions of his creatures expressive of homage to him, and productive of universal, social good, than he is by uncertain conjectures, or even accurate notions, which originate in self-possession, and terminate in social disunion.—How clear soever all these maxims may be, a certain degree of ambition or avarice, ignorance or malice, presumption or diffidence, or any other irregular passion, will render a man blind to the clearest demonstration, and insensible to the most rational and affecting persuasion.—These positions, mere opinions and prepossessions before examination, became demonstrative truths after a course of diligent search.

(To be continued.)

An Abstract of Watts's Rational Foundation of a Christian Church.

(Continued from Page 16.)

BUT in other churches, where the gifts were but few, the chief possessors of them, and especially the early and more experienced converts were chosen out to be elders, or guides, or leaders of their worship; pastors, or teachers, according to their peculiar talents of exhortation or instruction; and they were sometimes called *overseers*, that is, *bishops*, having an oversight of the people, and their behaviour, being reasonably supposed to know more of the will of Christ, than the common people, and to be more solicitous for the honour of christianity, and for its preservation. It is probable that sometimes these elders or overseers (the words are used promiscuously, Acts xx. 17, 28. Titus i. 5, 6, 7. 2 Peter v. 1. 2) might be pointed out by particular inspiration: hence, 1 Tim. vi. 18.—iv. 14. and in this sense the apostles and evangelists, Paul and Barnabas, Timothy and Titus, might perhaps, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, nominate the persons *fit to be ordained elders in the churches, suppose the consent of the churches* might ordain or appoint them for that purpose, Acts xiv. 23. 1 Tim. v. 22. Tit. i. 25. and perhaps this is the

the reason why it is said of the elders of Ephesus, that the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, Acts xx. 17, 28.—But it is hardly to be supposed, that any persons were made rulers, teachers, or overseers of any church of serious christians, without the consent of the society who were so taught and grounded by them in matters relating to their eternal interests. Even when an apostle was to be chosen in the place of Judas, the hundred and twenty disciples, of whom eleven were apostles, joined in the choice of two persons, out of which the lot determined one to be an apostle, Acts i. 15, 23. Deacons, who manage the secular affairs of the church, were chosen by the people, Acts vi. 3. And still more reasonable it is, that elders, or bishops, who have the care of their souls, should be chosen by those who want and desire their instructions in such important concerns.

In the following ages, when the extraordinary gifts ceased in the churches, it is more evident from the histories of those times, that their overseers, or bishops, were chosen by the people. And the characters of them are given us at large, and very particularly, in two places of scripture, 1 Tim. iii. 1. and Titus i. 5, 6. And certainly this is left upon record, that we might be directed in such a choice to the end of the world, as well as to give directions to Timothy and Titus, in the performance of their extraordinary office at that time.

SECT. III. *A brief inquiry how far the modes of the mission, or ordination of primitive ministers are our rule now.*

Upon this short survey of things under this head, give me leave first to make one observation, and then consider the inquiry proposed. The observation is this: Various were the affairs and regulations of the primitive church, relating to their several offices—but all these were much directed, and governed, influenced, determined, and transacted by extraordinary gifts; by the inspired persons who possessed them, that I cannot find in the New Testament, any one instance of the choice and mission, appointment and investiture of any ordinary officer in the church; or by any other officer or officers, who were not of this extraordinary kind; and therefore these things cannot, in every point, be rules or patterns for all following.

lowing times. Hence it is so difficult a question, and so exceedingly hard to affirm with exactness, and certainty, *how many of these officers, and of these solemn rites and actions*, were designed by Christ to be continued, in the following ordinary occasions of the churches, when extraordinary gifts should cease.

Let us, however, inquire what there is that is *certain and necessary in our own age, and is not subject to this occasion of doubting*.

1. This seems certain by the light of nature and reason, that christian assemblies, as well as any others, in ordinary as well as in extraordinary times, should have a teacher to instruct the ignorant in knowledge; and make known to the church the mind and will of God in his word; they should have an exhortation to stir up the people to the practice of their duty—a man of prayer, to address God in their public devotions—an overseer or bishop, to take charge of the flock, to inspect the manners of the people, and watch for the good of their souls—a president, to be chairman in their assemblies, to to keep up order there—and a grave and skilful person, fit to administer the rites and seals of the christian religion. Now all these characters, capacities, and talents, are often contained in one single person, who may be sufficient for a small church; or perhaps in two or three persons, for the supply of large churches.

2. I think we may take it for granted, that where God doth not interpose to point out the teachers and overseers, in any christian church by inspiration, there is no person or persons who have any rightful power, derived from either reason or scripture, to impose a teacher or overseer, on any assembly of christians whatsoever, without their consent; for it is they themselves that must give an account for their own souls to God; and therefore they must have a right to chuse who shall teach and lead them in matters of religion. Conscience is too sacred a thing to be imposed upon by fallible men; and the soul is too valuable to have its concerns intrusted with any person without its own agreement. And though the choice or consent of the churches may not be so particularly mentioned in scripture, when elders and bishops were ordained among them, by persons who were inspired, yet reason itself supposes it; and their extraordinary gifts from the Holy Spirit, proved
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and required the duty of submission and consent in the people, even if they had not a hand in the first choice of them. The great God could do them no wrong by appointing elders, or bishops, for them in an immediate way, or by inspiration.

But when extraordinary gifts ceased, we find many testimonies in the early writers, to the consent of the people in the choice of their church officers. The scripture itself makes it evident, that deacons were chosen by the people in primitive times, Acts vi. 3. *Brethren, look out from among you seven men, &c.* And these were to be intrusted only with the money, or temporal things of the church. And nature and universal custom, teach us, that physicians and lawyers, who are intrusted with the care of the bodies and estates of men, are not imposed upon us by others, but are chosen by the persons who intrust them. If I would learn philosophy, or any science, art, or trade, I have a natural right to chuse who shall instruct me in it. Even children are allowed to chuse their own guardians; and boys who are apprentices, to chuse their own masters: And doth not reason loudly proclaim this truth, that the *guides of our souls* in religion, ought to be chosen by ourselves, when we are at the age of man, as being a matter of dearer and more divine importance, than any other; and an affair in whose success none can be so much concerned as ourselves; for it is of ourselves that God will expect a final account? Let us then take heed to our own conduct in this matter, and remember that the New Testament has never appointed any inspired men to chuse pastors or teachers for a whole assembly of people, and impose them upon the assembly, or upon any particular members thereof, against their will.

3. It is certain also, that the persons should be fitly qualified who are chosen into this office or ministry; and though private christians have a right to chuse their ministers, and may best judge of the general suitableness of their talents to their own edification; yet they are seldom so fit judges of the qualifications of ministers, as those who have been some years ministers, pastors or teachers themselves; whether of the same or neighbouring churches; and therefore, reason tells us it is generally more proper that some of these more knowing and experienced men, should be consulted in this matter; and after due examination,
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and knowledge of the person, their approbation be obtained, encourage the choice of the people, where it can be conveniently had ; and therefore, in the scripture, we never find any ordinations by the people alone, without superior helps ; nor should it ever be done, where such helps can be obtained.

SECT. IV. *The rest of the Instances wherein Reason and Revelation agree in matters of Social Worship.*

1. The light of reason has directed mankind to support and maintain those who renounce secular employs, in order to minister in sacred things : The New Testament does the same, See 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.

But let it be observed, that though christian ministers should be so supported in temporal things, that they may not labour under anxiety how to provide for their families ; yet there is no rule or example in scripture that should raise them so far above the people in riches and grandeur, as to become lords over God's heritage, or tempt them to assume sovereign dominion over their conscience, faith, and practice.

2. With regard to the poor, reason and humanity dictate to us, that they ought to be assisted by the religious society they belong to, if civil society neglect them. Now that this provision may be properly managed, reason teaches, that proper persons should be appointed by the society for the care of the poor. We see this done by the New Testament church, at a very early period, Acts vi. Their characters are written down at large, 1 Tim. iii. 8, &c. because it was designed to be a standing office in the church through all ages. As the deacons are pastors appointed by the New Testament to take care of the money collected by the church, for the supply of the table of the poor ; so the same persons are very naturally and properly employed in christian churches, to take care also of all other contributions of the society, for the supply of the table of the minister, and of the communion table ; with them also, were intrusted other necessary expences and outward accommodations that belong to public worship.

3. I add yet further, the light of nature and reason teaches us, that all the management of religious affairs in a society, should be performed with a decency and dig-

nity becoming the things of God ; with gentleness also and condescension, peace and love. And are we not taught the same things in the New Testament? Col. iii. 14. Phil. ii. 4. 1 Cor xvi. 14.—xiv. 40.—x. 32. Rom. xii. 18.

4. In the last place, the light of nature also acquaints us, that when persons who belong to one religious society have to travel to distant places, they should have some recommendation, by epistles, to other societies, which are built upon the same religious principles. Here also, the New Testament happily concurs with the dictates of reason and common prudence, 2 Cor. iii. 1. Rom. xvi. 1, 2. Acts. xxviii. 27.

SECT. V. *When Revelation is silent, Reason must direct.*

1. Scripture does not tell us how many persons must go to make a christian church—but reason will help us to answer the question. A very few may be called an assembly ; and on the other hand, there should usually be no more than can meet together in one place, can act as one assembly, and join in social worship, in prayers and praises.

2. Scripture is silent how many of the lesser or circumstantial affairs of worship or order should be finally determined in a church, when there are some of the members of different sentiments, and make an opposition. But the light of reason teaches us, that in the affairs which God has left to the determination of men, such as the appointing the place, and hour of worship, chusing a minister, or the like, the major part of the assembly must determine it by their vote, and the lesser part ought to acquiesce, where it is not contrary to the dictates of their conscience, their edification in faith and holiness, or their reasonable convenience. But if the lesser part solemnly declare, they cannot comply therewith, they may peaceably depart to another society of christians, who may be more entirely of their mind ; for there must be no imposition, yet the major part may surely act for themselves.

3. The New Testament is very silent about the combination of particular congregations, by some common band of union to make one national church. What does the light of nature teach us in this point? I answer, the light of nature may sometimes lead many christian congregations,

gregations, even all that are in a nation, to combine together and agree to assist each other many ways, by counsel, encouragement, and support; but though all churches in a nation should be united and combined in this manner, by their representatives, and call themselves a national church, they could acquire no divine right or authority hereby, to impose any new doctrines or practices in religion, any creed, or articles, or canons, or rules of worship, of their own making, on any particular church or person whatsoever, without their own consent.

Neither the light of nature nor the New Testament, as far as I can find, has given them any such power.

4. Scripture is also supposed to be silent, how far the power and government of elders and bishops may extend; though it calls them sometimes rulers, and requires the church to obey them. Heb. xiii. 7, 17. May they not, therefore, invent new ceremonies of worship, and by their authority determine any of the matters in a christian society, which Christ has left undetermined in his word? I answer, if scripture be silent herein, let all church rulers take heed that they extend not this power beyond the actual commission or grant of scripture. It is always safer in point of dominion, to confine one's self within the limits of the express grant or commission, than to go ever so little beyond it. When our natural ambition would tempt us to exceed the limits, our awe and dread of invading the province of Christ should be an everlasting restraint. Besides, when neither the light of reason nor scripture give sufficient evidence of an authority to assume such a power, why should it be assumed?

What a strange medley of superstitious and ridiculous fooleries would be introduced into christian worship, if the elders or rulers in any ages of the church might invent ceremonies at their pleasure, and impose them on the people? The church of Rome has, by this means, become a theatre of Jewish and Heathen pageantry, to the great dishonour of God, the reproach of christianity, and the hazard and ruin of the souls of men.

(To be continued.)

Remarks on the Minutes of the last Conference.

IT may be supposed by some of our friends, that reflections on the minutes of the conference, at such an early period in this work, is premature. But when it is considered, that they are of very great importance to the connexion at large, this alone is sufficient to justify an attempt to set them in a proper light before our people. Many of the preachers declared, before they went to the last conference, that they would do every thing in their power, to have every grievance redressed which is complained of; and every thing added to our existing rules, that is necessary for our future welfare. In London, many of the leading preachers informed the delegates, who came from the country, that they were going to make rules and laws that would satisfy all parties. When a committee of the preachers met the delegates, and heard the addresses they presented, and were fully informed what was the design of their meeting, they assured the delegates, that the conference would particularly consider their remarks and petitions, and that every thing should be done to meet their views, that the conference could devise. The delegates were requested to wait till the minutes were published, and then they would be convinced how much the conference was concerned to promote their interests and happiness. Our friends in various places had their expectations exceedingly raised respecting the minutes. They waited with a good deal of anxiety till they saw them. They wisely remarked, if the preachers have actually made positive laws and rules that are just and equitable, the end of our contest is in a great measure answered. We shall bless God for disposing their hearts to act so nobly in our behalf. But when the minutes came to hand, and they found their expectation, on many subjects, cut off, they were exceedingly grieved. They saw with pleasure some slight alterations made, for the improvement of the different societies; but at the same time they read with grief, several new rules, which amazed and astonished them. Without any farther introduction, I shall first consider

consider the alterations that are made for the advantage of the people; and secondly, make some remarks upon several parts of the minutes, which appear to be calculated greatly to injure the work of God.

First, then, let us consider the alterations which have been made, for the advantage of our people.

1. The first alteration is found in these words:—"Respecting the admission of persons to be local preachers, let the assistant regularly meet the local preachers once a quarter, and let none be admitted but those that are proposed and approved at the meeting, and if in any circuit this be not practicable, let them be proposed and approved at the quarterly meeting." This is a good amendment.

2. The following is designed for an improvement; it is more than the conference ever published before on this head:—"With respect to persons that propose to travel, let none be recommended, to be received on trial, but such as have first been mentioned at the quarterly meeting in March, and approved at the district meeting following."

3. They have made a good rule respecting horses:—"From henceforth, we recommend to every circuit to provide the horse or horses necessary for that circuit. But if any circuit choose rather for the preachers to ride their own horses, we submit, on this condition: That no preacher shall make any collection or subscription towards paying for horses; but that all collections judged needful for this purpose, shall be made either by circuit stewards, or the stewards of the particular societies."

4. Some alterations have taken place in the preachers' fund. After speaking upon what they have fixed for the superannuated preachers or widows, according to the years of travelling; they add:—"But this allowance shall not preclude the conference from extending MERCY to any distressed brother, whose case may be represented to them. They shall consider his situation and circumstances, and add to this *just demand*, what to them may appear needful to support him comfortably. It shall likewise be in the power of the conference, to make suitable provision out of this fund, for the children of deceased preachers, and distressed widows, on any occasion which they shall judge necessary."

The following is designed for an amendment also :—
 “ If a widow marry, she shall have but half of her allowance during her second marriage. But if her second husband die, she shall again receive the whole as before, while she continues a widow.”

5. They have detailed the yearly expenditure. This, together with an account of what is received from each circuit for that collection, is a considerable improvement.

6. Respecting law-suits, which have lately cost the connexion so much, they have enacted :—“ Let no district-meeting, no preacher, nor number of preachers, or people whatsoever, on any consideration, involve the conference in a law-suit, nor have any demand on the conference for the expences, or any part of the expences of a law-suit; more especially concerning chapels or preaching-houses, without the consent of the conference previously obtained.”

7. The following appears an amendment :—“ Respecting collections, it was enacted last year, and we now confirm the rule, That the money collected in each circuit, for the yearly collection, for Kingswood-school, and the preachers’ fund, be entered in the general steward’s books, in their respective circuits. To this we add, that from henceforth, all the disbursements shall be published in detail in the yearly minutes of conference, as they are this year.”

8. “ As we desire to have every proper information on whatever concerns ourselves or our people, we will gladly receive intelligence, not only from leaders and quarterly meetings, but from any individual member of society, as well at the district-meeting, as at the conference, provided always, that the postage of letters, containing such information, be paid by the persons who write or send them.”

9. Lastly, They have reprinted “ former rules, which either were forgotten or overlooked, and which it would be well to bring forward into the view of our preachers and people.” One refers to singing anthems—another to singing too slow, &c. &c. And they have published, from the minutes of 1789, “ Let no preacher go out to supper, or be from home, if possible, after nine o’clock.” This rule forbids supping from home—and requires that no preacher, if possible, shall be out after nine o’clock.

Query;

Query; Is this rule enjoined in the bible? Does christian prudence require a strict attention to it? Did half of the preachers that helped to revise it, ever think of conforming to it? Did one-third of them keep it inviolate till the conference broke up?

In the particulars mentioned above, there are several considerable improvements of the old plan. I know many persons are astonished, that the conference should adopt any of the rules proposed in the out-lines of a constitution, in the same meeting that they expelled the Author for what he had written. Without attempting to reconcile this apparent inconsistency, I shall hasten, in the second place, to make some remarks upon the several parts of the minutes, which appear to be calculated greatly to injure the work of God.

1. They have made no alteration in regard to receiving or excluding members to or from the society. From the very rules they have quoted (in my remarks on Mr. Benson's pamphlet) I have proved that an assistant preacher, with the help of a single leader, can bring persons into the society without the knowledge or consent of the people. The same method may be taken in excluding members from the society. It is very singular that the preachers should bring forward the same minutes without attempting to invalidate what we have said upon the subject.

2. They have published, "As to the appointment, and change of the leaders and stewards, our rule is not to appoint or change any leader or steward, without consulting the leaders and stewards." Last year they said, "It has been our general custom." This year they say, "It is our rule." Upon this passage let it be remarked, 1. That there is no rule *existing* to consult the leaders and stewards of any society, before new leaders and stewards are appointed, or others changed. 2. Saying last year, "It has been our general custom," and this year, "Our rule is not to appoint, &c." are both evasive. Because the preachers know, that these declarations are not binding upon any assistant preacher in the connexion. 3. An assistant may consult, and act as he pleases afterwards. This consultation by no means binds him to be subject to the determination of a majority of a leaders' meeting. 4. Last year several preachers did change or appoint leaders and stewards, with-

out

out even consulting the leaders and stewards that were then in office. 5. Notwithstanding every thing the conference has said on this subject, an assistant preacher may change or appoint leaders and stewards without consulting those that are now in office; or, he may consult them and follow his own will afterwards, and be accountable to none for his conduct but the conference. He may do it with impunity.

3. Though there is a little alteration for the better, on the article of bringing out preachers to travel, yet does it not appear to every sensible impartial friend, that the minute is expressed in such a way, as to leave the power of bringing out persons to travel, entirely in the hands of the preachers? This will appear evident, if the following particulars are properly considered:—1. In regard to local preachers, they require that they shall be both *mentioned* and *approved* in quarterly meetings, before they shall receive plans. But it is only required that the persons proposed to travel shall be *mentioned* in quarterly meetings. If they had enacted for them to have been *approved* as well as mentioned, our friends would have been satisfied. For a person may be mentioned, and strongly recommended there, and not be accepted afterwards. Or, a person may be mentioned, and the voice of the meeting may be against him, and yet he may be received on trial at the next conference. 2. It is enacted, that the persons mentioned at quarterly meetings, shall be approved of at the meeting of the district. According to the laws of Methodism, or the conduct of the preachers, the people can have no place by their representatives in district meetings. The preachers transact all the affairs of them among themselves. Here, when none of the people can be heard, the persons proposed to travel are to be approved! 3. According to the letter and spirit of the minute, all the liberty the people have in the choice of their own preachers, is barely to hear them mentioned in a quarterly meeting. They have nothing farther to do in this business. The power to approve or disapprove is solely in the hands of the district meetings and the conference, where the people have not a single voice, or a single representative.

I am informed, that several preachers have attempted to explain away the meaning of this minute. They declare,

clare, to mention, includes approved. By this mode of explanation, the minutes may mean any thing, or nothing. The conference had the word *approved* in the paragraph above, and in the paragraph these reflections allude to. And no person can with any degree of justice suppose, that the word was omitted through mistake, in the minute we are examining.

4. The next rule which requires our serious attention, is found in the 28th page: "Let no local preacher be allowed to preach in any other circuit without producing a recommendation from the circuit where he lives; nor suffer any invitation to be admitted as a plea, whether from men in office or not, without the previous knowledge, and full consent of the superintendant of the place, where any one may ask him to preach."

Upon this rule let us remark, 1. That there are a great number of very respectable local preachers, who are well known in many circuits near their place of residence. They have preached in the houses of their friends, and in the chapels belonging to the connexion, to the edification of thousands. 2. In Mr. *Wesley's* life time, and since his death, they have had full liberty to preach where they are well known. Neither they, nor our friends, had the most distant idea of the necessity of any application to superintendant preachers, for them to preach the gospel, where they are so well known, and their labours have been so much blessed. 3. This conference has enacted, however, in as strong terms as the English language will admit of, that a local preacher must have certificates from two superintendant preachers, before he can preach in a circuit where he does not live. Suppose the most respectable local preacher in Leeds, were to be invited by trustees, leaders and stewards, who are men in office, to go to preach in places where he is well known, in Wakefield, Dewsbury, Birstal, Halifax, Bradford, Keighley, Otley, Middleham, Ripon, York, and Pontefract circuits, which are all within a few hours ride of Leeds, he must first apply to Mr. Benson for a certificate of recommendation for every place. Should he go to a place in each of those circuits he must have eleven recommendatory certificates from Mr. Benson, and application must be made to the eleven assistants of those circuits, for certificates, containing an account of *their approbation* and full consent, before the local preacher

preacher would have a right to supply them. If Mr. B—— could make one certificate answer for every place (which would be difficult to do, unless he knew where a local preacher might be invited) yet separate certificates must be had from each of the other assistants. 4. What can all this mean? Is not this minute designed to bring every local preacher into a state of abject submission to assistant preachers? Can charity itself suppose that this rule is not made to restrain their influence, and to give assistant preachers a greater share of power? Will the local preachers submit to this rule, and walk in the way which it points out? Can they in conscience sacrifice their liberty, to gratify the views of any that may make laws to bind them, beyond whatever was known in the records of Methodism?

The general argument which several preachers make use of, to justify this rule, is this:—It was made to prevent travellers from imposing upon our people. They add, it was never designed to operate on the local preachers in general. But let me ask, If the conference only wished to bind travellers to order, why did they not express the rule only to mean them? We cannot for a moment suppose, but that the wisdom of one hundred and fifty preachers might have made a particular rule to have restricted travellers, without binding the rest of the local preachers. Has any preacher, or number of preachers, a right to explain away the meaning of their own rules? Does not this rule positively declare, "Let no local preacher be allowed to preach in any other circuit, &c.?" Can any thing be more express? And will any person attempt to persuade us, that the conference only meant to restrain travellers by this rule; and that local preachers in general, have nothing to do with it? One of the greatest evils that attends our connexion is, the conference makes positive laws, that have no ambiguity in any expression they contain, and the preachers explain them away in a few weeks after they are made. If this be allowed, can the different societies know what rules mean? If their literal and grammatical sense may be explained away by any preacher, and a conduct allowed with impunity, as opposite to the rules enacted, as light is to darkness, can the different societies be satisfied? If any local preacher go into another circuit without carrying a certificate with him, and at the

the same time do not produce a certificate from the superintendant where he goes, to shew that he is authorized to preach, he breaks a revealed law of the conference; and the preachers cannot suffer him to go unreprieved, or without some kind of punishment, without trampling underfoot their own rules! Very many local preachers, however, are going forward as usual, without degrading their office, to seek certificates for permission to preach to the people, who thankfully receive them, as the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.

5. The liberty of the press among the preachers, is effectually set aside, by the last conference. They have enacted, "That as the preachers are eminently one body, nothing should be done by any individual, which would be prejudicial to the whole, or to any part thereof. Therefore *no preacher shall publish any thing* but what is given to the conference, and printed in our own presses. The Book Committee to determine what is proper to be printed."

Upon this passage let us remark, 1. That the preachers acknowledge "The liberty of the press is our undoubted privilege," This is their avowed sentiment. 2. Yet they attempt to make it out, that they are "*eminently one body*," and therefore, nothing should be done by any individual which would be prejudicial to the whole, or any part thereof. Nothing must be done that would injure the power and influence of the conference, or any member of it. If *stating facts* respecting rules, the conduct of the preachers in general, or individuals in particular, would weaken their authority, lessen their income or influence, it must not be attempted by any member of that body, "*which is eminently one.*" 3. As several letters and pamphlets have lately been circulated, which pointed out a number of evils that exist in the connexion, which are calculated to carry conviction to the consciences of all that read them; the conference seems to be more afraid of the press, employed by any member of its own body, than any thing else. Travelling preachers have access within the veil, and should they write what they have *seen and heard*, this would amazingly affect the whole body of the people. Witness the effects produced by the writings of A. KILHAM last year. 4. Therefore, *no preacher shall publish any thing*, good, bad, or indifferent, "but

“but what is given to the conference, the book committee to determine what is proper to be printed.” Most of the preachers belonging to the book committee are the very persons that have the chief management of our affairs in their hands. They wish to persuade our people, that there are no particular grievances in the connexion. Nothing will be allowed to pass through their hands, that is calculated to weaken or destroy their authority and influence; or any that share with them in the management of our affairs. By this act, passed in the year 1796, every preacher is effectually prevented from exposing any evils to our people, unless he set aside this rule, and submit to the consequences. If their hands are bound, however, the hands of local preachers, trustees, leaders, stewards, and private members are at liberty. And since the laws of our country allow us to print and circulate what we please on this subject, every thing necessary for the welfare of Methodism may be communicated, and the different societies be at liberty to examine what concerns their own happiness, without interruption.

6. But the following rule is more important, and affects the different societies more than any thing that is found in the minutes:—“Let no man, or number of men, in our connexion, on any account or occasion, circulate letters, call meetings, do, or attempt to do any thing *new*, till it has been first appointed by the conference.” In this minute we find the preachers assuming absolute dominion over the people, and forbidding what the laws of God and man allow. The scriptures, and the laws of our country, allow members belonging to the Methodist connexion to meet together, without first petitioning the conference for liberty.

Let us make a few reflections upon this rule. 1. If an individual, or several persons receive a number of letters, sermons, &c. that are calculated to be of infinite service to thousands of our people, they cannot be circulated till next July, without breaking the laws of Methodism. 2. If matters of the greatest importance in a circuit, that require immediate examination and consultation, should happen, requiring a meeting of the trustees, leaders, and stewards, a meeting of this nature is forbidden till the conference meet next year. 3. If a man, or number of men should do, or only attempt to do any thing

thing that is new, as it may refer to singing, praying, exhortation, preaching, class and band meetings, love-feasts, &c. this minute will be violated, and the person or persons exposed to suitable reproof, &c. unless the conference be first petitioned. 4. Should the people tamely submit to this rule till next July, and then petition the conference to circulate letters, call meetings, &c. that are any ways calculated to invade their present privileges, have they any reason to expect, that the conference would appoint any such meetings? Upon the whole, were the rights of the people ever invaded by any former rule of conference equal to what this minute requires? Can it be supposed, that 100,000 Methodists will submit to it, without hesitation? On the contrary, will it not shake the slumber from their minds, and lead them to claim the privileges which belong to them as men, and as christians?

In many places, the leading men in our societies have openly declared, that none of the arbitrary rules of the conference shall be binding upon them. Local preachers have gone as usual to supply in neighbouring circuits, without seeking certificates from the superintendant preachers. Meetings have been called and attended in many places. Several things new have been attempted.

At an adjourned quarterly meeting, held in the old library room, in Leeds, on the 3d October, 1796, when there were present local preachers, trustees, leaders, and stewards, the following queries were proposed for the consideration of the brethren, and unanimously answered in the affirmative:—

1. "Are not the rules formed by the Methodist conference of importance to every member of the societies? 2. Is it not the duty of every member to have some knowledge of the rules, in which they are so deeply interested? 3. When the conference forms rules which do not appear eligible to the societies, is it not the duty of the societies to reject those rules, informing the conference of their reasons for so doing? 4. Doth not common sense and the scriptures warrant them to do so? 5. Is it not the duty of the circuits to communicate their sentiments to each other on every subject which they may deem of sufficient importance? 6. Are not the minutes of the conference, respecting local preachers, holding meetings, &c.

founded on principles opposite to the bible—injurious to the Methodist body—and capable, if carried to their extent, of being applied to the worst of purposes? 7. Ought any superintendant preacher to have the power of withdrawing a plan from a local preacher, or of expelling a member from the society, till matters have been fairly and openly examined, before a leader or quarterly meeting? 8. Is it the most advantageous for our societies, that the local preachers' plans be made by the superintendant?—Would it not be better for a committee, chosen by, and out of the body of local preachers, to assist therein? A fair copy thereof to be presented at a quarterly meeting, and that the voice of the representatives of the people be strictly attended to? Lastly, May not circumstances occur, in which we must either reject some of the rules made by the conference, or act contrary to our own consciences? Is it not, therefore, a duty we owe to ourselves and the whole Methodist body, to declare, in the most explicit manner, against such rules?"

7. Though the expenditure of the yearly collection is detailed this year, yet there are several things truly exceptionable in the account. 1. The manner of stating the different sums is more like the work of a school-boy, before he is acquainted with multiplication, than the work of a select committee of the Methodist conference. 2. In adding up the account of what was received last year, they have made it near a thousand pounds more than it really is! 3. The accounts of many of the circuits are very incorrect. The people are amazed at the sums which have been received at the conference. On my return from London, one of the circuit stewards was astonished to see seven pounds five shillings charged to their circuit last year. We met the assistant, and asked him some questions on the subject; the circuit had given him the usual allowance for servant's wages; yet, he received two pounds from the conference on that account. He never applied to them to raise it two pounds in the year; nor did he inform them that he was going to apply to the conference for any increase of wages for his servant. He also received five guineas, which are put down, for sickness, from the conference. Our friends declared they had paid the doctor's bill. He told us, he had received the five guineas for a poor mother, that had need of help. We begged to know

know what was the reason of the sum being put down for sickness, when there was a place in the minutes which specified the sums paid for the mothers of two preachers. He began to lose his temper, and declared he had no business with it, the conference published it as they chose. Our friend, the circuit steward, told him, he considered the steps he had taken to be neither more nor less than downright swindling. I told him, it did not astonish me at all, that he and many others, should rise up in my condemnation, and sign my expulsion, for publishing to the people how their money is expended at the conference.

In July, the conference refused to explain the large account for sickness last year. This year they have detailed it; but unfortunately for themselves, it is found out already, that in many circuits, where large bills have been allowed for sickness, the people paid the doctor's bills. In other places, they advanced most of the money that could anyways be charged to sickness. One of our friends, on looking over the minutes, and considering what the different circuits had advanced for sickness, besides the sums received at the conference, said, "One would suppose the preachers had the yellow fever in their families, by the bills they have carried into the conference; but they have had recourse to skilful doctors, as hardly any of them have died." Only examine the minutes upon this article, and you will find such bills for sickness, as will astonish you. But it appears evident, that in respect of several circuits, many things are included in the word sickness. The conference ought to have told us what is implied in the word, then we should have been capable of judging, how far the preachers had a right to demand the sums they have received from the yearly collection.

8. We have only the gross sum of what was subscribed either for the Kingswood school, or the preachers' fund. It would have been easy to have published in detail what every circuit gave. This would have been attended with many advantages to the preachers, and given great satisfaction to the people. Long debates took place in the conference upon the rules of the preachers' fund, I am informed. The debates were confined, to what they called the merciful and the just plan. The rules that were so *much* and so *justly* reprobated last year, were called the

just plan. And making rules to meet the peculiar distress of any superannuated preachers or widows, together with providing in particular cases for children, was called the *merciful plan*. Every one of the rules we reprobated in our letters and pamphlets lately circulated, is included in the just plan.

Let us seriously inquire, Is it a just plan that refuses to let the real wants of the preachers and widows be the rule of disbursement? Is it a just plan that authorizes the superannuated to have pounds a year for life, according to the number of years they have travelled, whether they want them or not? Is it a just plan that does not provide a sufficient allowance for a man that has travelled only a few years, and has no property of his own? Can a just plan admit of a person drawing thirty or forty pounds a year from this fund, when he has no need of it; and at the same time withhold from worthy objects, that have no property of their own, what is necessary to keep them from starving? Has not every preacher that is fairly superannuated, a right in justice, to a suitable maintenance from this fund? Should he not receive this as a debt the conference owes to him, and not as an act of mercy, which they may exercise? Does not even justice require, that a fair distribution of this collection should be allowed, and that those who are in distressing circumstances should have a right to demand suitable supplies, and not to seek them as a gift, which the conference may either impart or withhold at pleasure? When there are four or five hundred pounds subscribed yearly, more than are disbursed, should there be such a word as mercy found in the rules? Do not the people subscribe that the real wants of the superannuated, and their families, may be amply supplied, and can the preachers in justice withhold what they need, while they are laying up so many hundred pounds every year?

It would require the gravity of an apostle, to write with particular seriousness upon the rule that respects widows. Last year the rule stood for them to have pounds a year for life, according to the years their husbands had travelled, whether they married or continued in their widowhood. But this year the wisdom of the conference has been manifested, in *solemnly enacting*, That should any of the widows of preachers marry again, they shall be immediately

mediately reduced to half pay. Nevertheless, *be it farther enacted*, That should these good women lose their second husbands, they shall be immediately restored to *whole pay again*. When the widows of officers in the army or navy marry, they instantly lose their annuity. In the church of Scotland, subscriptions are entered into by the ministers for the support of their widows after their decease; but they forfeit their right to the allowance, on their marrying a second time. This is the case with many funds established in this nation. There is a vast difference, however, between their subscriptions and ours. They have only what the members subscribe, but we beg six or seven hundred a year from the people, to help our subscriptions. If they cannot afford to take widows to half pay when they marry again, and to whole pay when they lose their second husbands, we can afford it or more, should the wisdom of conference enact it, while our people are so amazingly liberal. If they should examine into the subject, and find out that their money is misapplied, they might then withhold their subscriptions, and our widows be supplied, as the widows of other funds are.

(To be concluded in the next number.)

To the Editor of the MONITOR.

SIR,

YOUR beneficent exertions, for the attainment of a rational reformation in the Methodist Connexion, reflects upon you the justest honour from every sensible and unbiaſſed person; but from the interested, and prejudiced, you neither can, nor will expect better treatment than you have already experienced. Unfortunately, such has been the case in every age of the world, that nothing substantially great and good was ever effected without much opposition, though even supported by miracles. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, though he evidenced the truth of his doctrine by the wonders that he wrought, yet, *was a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief: He came to his own, and his own received him not: With eyes streaming over the anticipated calamities of rebellious Jerusalem, he exclaimed—O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathereth her*

chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not. The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, while the Son of Man had not where to lay his head.

Thus it happened to the Lord of Life and Glory ; and his poor followers were not better treated. Their names were cast out as evil : they were esteemed the filth and off-scouring of all things ; wandering from place to place, to publish the tidings of everlasting salvation. Their Master had set them the example by sealing his testimony with his blood ; and many of them were called to drink the remaining dregs of the same bitter cup, and thus fill up the measure of the sufferings of Christ. Tertullian thus beautifully writes of his gospel :—“ *Scit se peregrinam in terris agere, inter extraneos facile inimicos invenire. Ceterum genus, sedem, spem, gratiam, dignitatem in cælis habere : unum gestit interdum, ne ignorata damnetur.*”—“ She knows herself to be a stranger here upon earth, and thence, expects but enemies in a foreign land—that her kindred, her abode, her hopes, her favours, and her preferments are in the heavens above : This one thing she intreats, That she may not be condemned till understood.” Scriptures sacred and profane assure us, that every engine was employed, which earth or hell could invent, to demolish the rising stem of the christian cause ; but, praised be the Lord, they were ineffectual : To the proudest waves of the raging sea, the Almighty has, and can say—*Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther.*

Again ; when popery had enveloped the nations in thickest darkness, and another, and another reformer emerged from the horrid gloom, to recover the long-lost splendour of divine truth, you will remember what unmerited opposition immediately commenced. Calvin and Luther had to wade through floods of persecution to the hallowed shores of divine truth. Many of the German reformers perished in the attempt ; and the smoking sacrifices in our own country are yet but rising fresh before our eyes. In fine, every thing that we enjoy that is substantially good and great ; if it had the misfortune to differ, at its outset, from existing prejudices, though even foolish or wicked, has been uniformly obliged to consolidate its root-hold by painful struggles and persevering toil :—Such was the case with Methodism itself—and such perhaps may be the case with your present eventful contest.

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One cannot, without a great degree of sorrow, contemplate the many unchristian actions that christians (so called) are justly charged with in the pages of history; and the conference's late uncharitable expulsion of Alexander Kilham from the Methodist connexion, adds one more to the lamentable number. Intolerance is the same, whether it proceeds from a Papist or a Methodist. When—O when shall love—humble love—tolerating love, cover the face of the earth? Nay, when shall it even fill the hearts of God's people?

You are doomed, respected Sir, to bear the burthen and heat of the day; and as such, must assuredly stand in need of the support of friendship, and the efficacy of prayers; both which, I trust, will deservedly attend you. Be not cast down; resting on the equity of your cause, and the approbation of conscience, you may very safely conclude, that truth, though by slow, yet sure steps, will win its widening way; and through the blessing of the Almighty, eventually bear away the palm in triumph: *Truth is great, and will prevail!*

It is asserted by some, *That the Methodist connexion and society would be much benefited by persecution*; and I am inclined to believe it; for winnowing times would discover the chaff from the wheat, and compress the corns of wheat together. The Lord grant, that if such days must come, they may come in great mercy! I fear many of us would be found without covering sufficient to bear the blast. However, we may have the consolation by trusting in the promise of God; that *as our day is, so shall our strength be*. We have not yet *resisted sin unto blood*, nor had occasion to do it; thanks to the Lord of heaven and earth, and to the laws of our land! But, verily, if civil justice did not happily restrain the power of some impetuous spirits, I believe, ere now, this would have been our strange situation. The Lord pity such; and give them and us, the peaceful lowly mind that was in Jesus Christ; that we may be qualified to live in peace on earth, and in glory hereafter.

If this find a place in your Monitor, and the Lord spare me, and my present ideas, you may probably hear again from—

EUGENIUS PHILALETES.

P. S. I purpose to present your readers of the next Monitor, with a few observations on a Sermon, preached by Mr. Benson, before the London Conference; and since preached at Leeds, from the beginning of 1 Cor. iv.

Some Regulations and Helps proposed for promoting Religious Conversation among Christians.

(Extracted from the Rev. Samuel Walker's Practical Tracts.)

IT is proposed, that a select number of Christian friends do agree to meet together weekly for improving each other in Christian knowledge and practice by the grace of God. The following Regulations are submitted to consideration as proper to preserve order, and to promote the ends designed by such a meeting:

Regulation 1. That every person come to the meeting now proposed with a prepared heart, expecting, through divine grace, to receive improvement in saving knowledge, self-conviction, and edification. *2.* That the conversation be introduced and ended with prayer. *3.* That they speak freely, and lay open their hearts, as far as their own case, or that of others, may require. *4.* That they beware of conceit in delivering their sentiments, and of diffidence in being afraid to speak them. *5.* That in the spirit of meekness and humility, counting others better than themselves, they do warn each other of their faults, freely and affectionately examining every thing thoroughly. *6.* That the conversation be confined to the state of one another, and that all prying curiosity be excluded. *7.* That each person be allowed to speak in turn, and that as briefly as possible. That none be interrupted while speaking; and when all have delivered their sentiments, that the enquirer may then apply what has been said to his own case, and nothing farther be said on that subject; unless the enquirer should desire any person more fully to explain himself. *8.* That each person do carefully examine and watch over his own heart, that no disgust be taken against any who have spoken freely to his case, or may seem to have more knowledge or experience than himself. *9.* That they often ask their own hearts, Whether they have a desire to come to such conversation? and if not, Why? *10.* That afterwards each person carefully recollect, and endeavour to improve the conversation. *11.* That what passes in such conversation be not divulged elsewhere.

Helps to Christian Conversation.

Questions to be put to every person, and to be answered openly and freely; and let every person (if willing) take it in turn to propose them in their several conversations.

First

First Conversation.—Humility.

Quest. Have you a practical judgment of your being a (a) guilty—(b) weak—(c) blind creature?

(a) You may know how far you have a practical judgment of your being a *guilty* creature, 1. By your being without confidence to approach God but through a Redeemer. 2. By your patience in waiting for all mercies, spiritual and temporal. 3. By your thankfulness for all things. 4. By your resignation, when under the hand of God or man. 5. By your freedom to own your faults, when needful. 6. By your meekness in bearing reproof. 7. By your aptness to esteem others better than yourselves.

(b) You may know how far you have a practical judgment of your *weakness*, 1. By your referring all good thoughts, desires, purposes and deeds to God's grace. 2. By your distrust of your own strength on all occasions. 3. By your frequency in looking up for strength to enable you to all duties and against all temptations. 4. By your importunity in asking the grace of God. 5. By your diligence in the use of all the means of obtaining this grace.

(c) You may know how far you have a practical judgment of your *blindness*, 1. By your looking to the word of God for all direction. 2. By your seeking the light of the Spirit to make you understand the Scriptures, and not referring yourself to your own reasonings upon them. 3. By your dependence on the light of the Spirit in prayer. 4. By your distrust of your own judgment. 5. By your patience in hearing the judgment of others. 6. By your not being apt to dispute. 7. By your readiness to seek advice.

Second Conversation.—Faith in Jesus Christ.

Quest. Have you a practical knowledge of Christ Jesus as of God made unto us (a) righteousness—and (b) sanctification—and (c) wisdom?

(a) You may discover how far you practically know Christ as your *righteousness*, 1. By your fleeing to him for refuge from the accusations of conscience, the sense of guilt, and the fear of death. 2. By the relief you find in your soul from such applications in all these cases. 3. By the frequency and speediness of your applications to Christ. 4. By your humble boldness in them. 5. By your being able

able to look on God as a Father in Christ. 6. By the hope you have of glory through the merits of Christ.

(b) You may discover how far you practically know Christ as your *strength* for sanctification, 1. By the frequency of your application to him for grace. 2. By your confidence that his grace is sufficient to keep you in every case, against every enemy, and to sanctify you wholly. 3. By your not declining any duty you are called to through fear of failing in it. 4. By your being sensible, that whatever you are, and do, according to God's will, is by his grace. 5. By your persisting vigorously in opposing sin, especially that which most easily besets you, and in seeking advancement in holiness, under whatever discouragements. 6. By your not despairing of success, though sin be apt sometimes to gain advantage over you.

(c) You may discover how far you practically know Christ as of God made unto us *wisdom*, 1. By your referring yourself, not to the reason of men, but to the word of God for direction in all matters of religion. 2. By your having your foundation for what you believe and practise built on God's word, not man's authority. 3. By your being fully satisfied with what God declares in any case, so as to find no doubt remaining. 4. By your steadiness, and not being disconcerted, because of the differing judgments of others concerning what you have seen with your own eyes in the scriptures. 5. By your meekness towards those who differ from you. 6. By your diligence in reading and hearing God's word.

Third Conversation—Love of God.

Quest. Do you practically chuse God as your (a) portion to enjoy—and your (b) Master to serve.

(a) You may determine how far you choose God for your portion to enjoy, 1. By the desire you have of being satisfied on scripture grounds that you are in his favour. 2. By the support which the consciousness of his being near you gives your soul. 3. By the care you take to walk in the sense of his presence. 4. By your abstaining from such indifferent things as you have found by experience cause you to lose the sense of his presence. 5. By your endeavour to keep the sense of his presence with you
in

in the duties of your calling. 6. By the desire you have of meeting him in all the divine ordinances. 7. By the encouragement you receive from the expectation of seeing him face to face, and being for ever with him. 8. By the delight you take in those who are like him. 9. By the preference, which, when brought to the trial, you in fact give to God's favour beyond every earthly thing.

(b) You may judge how far you choose God for your Master, 1. By the care you take to please him. 2. By the cheerfulness wherewith you do it. 3. By your cleaving stedfastly to his will in all trying cases. 4. By the self-displeasure you feel whenever you have done any thing to offend him. 5. By the diligence you use in searching the scriptures to know what his will is. 6. By the constancy and importunity of your prayers for grace to enable you to serve him better. 7. By your watchfulness against temptations. 8. By the determination of your heart against the sin that does most easily beset you. 9. By your sorrow to see him dishonoured as he is in the world.

Fourth Conversation.—Love of our Neighbour.

Quest. Do you (a) desire and (b) delight in the welfare of all mankind, spiritual and temporal?

(a) You may know how far you desire, I. The spiritual welfare of all others, 1. By the concern you have that your conduct may encourage them in all good ways. 2. By the concern you have that there may be nothing in your conduct which may be an offence to any. 3. By your cheerfulness in foregoing any thing which you judge may be an offence. 4. By your forbearance with all for their good. 5. By your readiness to improve all opportunities of benefiting your neighbour's soul. 6. By your valuing your gifts and influence chiefly because they may render you helpful to the souls of others. 7. By the frequency and importunity of your prayers for the grace of God upon them.—You may know how far you desire, II. The temporal welfare of others, 1. By your aptness to make their case your own, thinking and acting for them as need is. 2. By your readiness to give out of your abundance. 3. By your frugality and savingness on yourself,

yourself, that you may have wherewith to help others.
4. By your willingness to give or lend without being asked, where you see it is wanted.

(6) You may know how far you delight in, I. The spiritual welfare of others, 1. By the satisfaction you take in those who are good. 2. By your readiness to hope the best. 3. By your finding yourself grieved at the falls and backslidings of others. 4. By your compassion over sinners. 5. By the indignation you find against yourself, for any risings of disgust against any for being better than yourself. 6. By your joy in the success of the gospel, whoever be the instrument.——You may know how far you delight in, II. The temporal welfare of others, 1. By your not secretly envying them their advancement. 2. By your hearing of it without disgust. 3. By your speaking of it without lessening it. 4. By your rejoicing in their prosperity, as far as it is not made prejudicial to their souls.

Fifth Conversation.—Hope of Glory.

Quest. Are you waiting and longing for the joy that shall be revealed in you, when your soul being perfected in holiness, and your body being spiritualized, you shall see and enjoy God for ever in the face of JESUS CHRIST?

You may discover how far this hope is in you, 1. By the indifference it has begotten in you to the pleasures, riches and honours of the world. 2. By your readiness to part with them when they interfere with these your future expectations. 3. By the deadness you find in you to the love of life. 4. By your quietness and patience in present troubles or reproaches. 5. By the light account you make of such troubles and reproaches. 6. By the frequency of your thinking of this approaching glory. 7. By the delight which the thought of it gives you. 8. By the desire you have to depart and be with Christ.

Sixth

No. III.

THE

Methodist Monitor.

Robinson's Preface to the third Volume of Saurin's Sermons.

(Continued from Page 45.)

“ Is it not the Duty of every Individual, who wishes well to the Prosperity of Zion, to use all his Exertions to rectify the Judgments of his misinformed Brethren? To expose the Truth—the naked Truth to their View, that their Tranquillity may not be again ruffled, by the Clamours of Ignorance, or the Blasts of Malevolence ?”—*Letter from the Local Preachers, &c. Leeds, Jan. 1795.*

BUT, previous to all inquiries concerning the doctrines of christianity, it is absolutely necessary to establish that of CHRISTIAN LIBERTY; for, say we what we will, if this preliminary doctrine of right be disallowed, voluntary piety is the dream of an enthusiast; the oracles of God in the christian world, like those of the Sybils in pagan Rome, are sounds convertible of senatorial sense; and the whole christian mission, from the first prophet down to the last minister, is one long muster-roll of statesmen's tools, a disgrace to their species, a contradiction to their profession, a dishonour to their God!

Christian liberty in Italy is—liberty to be a Roman catholic, that is, liberty to believe what the bishop of Rome affirms to be true, and liberty to perform what he commands to be done. Christian liberty in some reformed churches is—liberty to renounce what the reformers renounced, to believe what they affirmed, and to practise what they required. But we, who *have not so learned Christ*, define christian liberty otherwise; and if we be asked, What is christian liberty? we answer, It is liberty to be a christian. One part of christianity consists of propositions to be believed. Liberty to be a christian believer is—liberty to examine these propositions, to form a judgment of them, and to come to a self-determination, according to our own best abilities. Another part of christianity consists of duties to be performed. Liberty to be a practical christian is—liberty to perform these

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duties,

duties, either as they regard God, our neighbour, or ourselves. Liberty to be a christian implies liberty not to be a christian, and liberty to examine a proposition implies liberty to reject the arguments brought to support it, if they appear inconclusive, as well as liberty to admit them, if they appear demonstrative. To pretend to examine christianity, before we have established our right to do so, is to pretend to cultivate an estate, before we have made out our title to it.

The object of christian liberty, that, with which a man who would examine christianity, has to do, is a system of christian doctrine ; but, having established the doctrine of right, before we proceed to exercise this right by examining the religion proposed to mankind by Jesus Christ, it is absolutely necessary to inquire what we ought, on sound principles of just and fair reasoning, to expect to find in it. I know some truths without revelation. I have a full demonstration in nature, that there is one God—that it is impossible there should be more than one—that he is an intelligent Spirit—and that he is a wise and bountiful Being. Should any religion, which pretends to be divine, affirm there is a plurality of gods—God is not an intelligent Spirit—God is an unwise and unkind Being—I should have a right to reject this pretended revelation. Indeed, should a revealed religion allow my demonstrations, and afterwards explain them in a manner quite subversive of my former explications of them ; should it affirm, God is, as you say, a wise and bountiful being : but he displays his wisdom and goodness not in governing his intelligent creatures as you have imagined ; such a moral government, I will prove to you, would shew a defect in wisdom and goodness : not but he displays the supreme perfection of both by providing for such and such interests, and by bestowing such and such benefits, as have either escaped your notice, or were beyond your comprehension. In this case, I ought not to reject the revelation, for, although I can demonstrate, without inspiration, the wisdom and goodness of God, yet I cannot pretend by the light of nature to know all the directions, and to ascertain all the limits of these perfections.

Lay christianity before me who will, I expect to find three things in it, which I call analogy, proportion, and

and perfection. Each of these articles opens a wide field of not incurious speculation, and each fully explained and applied would serve to guide any man in his choice of a religion, yea in his choice of a party among the various divisions of christians: but alas! we are not employed now-a-days in examining and choosing religious principles for ourselves, but in subscribing, and defending those of our ancestors! A few hints then shall serve.

By analogy I mean resemblance, and, when I say a revealed religion must bring along with it an analogical evidence, I mean, it must resemble the just dictates of nature. The reason is plain. The same Supreme Being is the Author of both. The God of nature has formed man for observing objects, comparing them together, laying down principles, inferring consequences, reasoning and self-determining; he has not only empowered all mankind to exercise these abilities, but he has even constrained them by a necessity of nature to do so; he has not only rendered it impossible for men to excel without this exercise, but he has even rendered it impossible for them to exist safely in society without it. In a word, the God of nature has made man in his own image, a self-determining being, and, to say nothing of the nature of virtue, he has rendered free consent essential to every man's felicity and peace. With his own consent subjection makes him happy; without it, dominion over the universe would make him miserable.

The religion of nature (I mean by this expression, here, the objects, which display the nature of the Deity, and thereby discover the obligations of mankind) is in perfect harmony with the natural constitution of man. All natural objects offer evidence of all: but force it on none. A man may examine it, and he may not examine it: he may admit it, and he may reject it: and, if his rejection of the evidence of natural religion be not expressed in such overt-acts as are injurious to the peace of civil society, no man is empowered to force him, or to punish him? the supreme moral Governor of the world himself does not distinguish him here by any exterior punishments; at most he expresses his displeasure by marks attached to the person of the culprit, and concealed from all the rest of his fellow-creatures; and the glory of civil

society is not to encroach on the moral government of God.

Christianity comes, pretends to come from the God of nature; I look for analogy, and I find it: but I find it in the holy scriptures, the first teachers, and the primitive churches. In all these, I am considered as a rational creature, objects are proposed, evidence is offered: if I admit it, I am not entitled hereby to any temporal emoluments; if I refuse it, I am not subjected to any temporal punishments; the whole is an affair of conscience, and lies between each individual and his God. I choose to be a christian on this very account. This freedom, which I call a perfection of my nature; this self-determination, the dignity of my species, the essence of my natural virtue; this I do not forfeit by becoming a christian, this I retain, explained, confirmed, directed, assisted by the regal grant of the Son of God. Thus the prerogatives of Christ, the laws of his religion, and the natural rights of mankind being analagous, evidence arises of the dignity of the religion of Jesus.

I believe it would be very easy to prove, that the christianity of the church of Rome, and that of every other establishment, because they are establishments, are totally destitute of this analogy. The religion of nature is not capable of establishment, the religion of Jesus Christ is not capable of establishment: if the religion of any church be capable of establishment, it is not analagous to that of scripture, or that of nature. A very simple example may explain our meaning. Natural religion requires a man to pay a mental homage to the Deity, to venerate his perfections, by adoring and confiding in them. By what possible means can these pious operations of the mind be established? could they be forced, their nature would be destroyed, and they would cease to be piety, which is an exercise of the judgment and will. Revealed religion requires man to pay a mental homage to the Deity through Jesus Christ, to venerate his perfections by adoring and confiding in them as christianity directs; by repentance, by faith, by hope, and so on. How is it possible to establish those spiritual acts? A human establishment requires man to pay this christian mental homage to the Deity by performing some external ceremony, suppose bowing to the east. The ceremony, we grant, may be established: but, the voluntary

tary exercise of the soul in the performance, which is essential to the christianity of the action, who in the world can establish this? If the religion of Jesus be considered as consisting of external rights and internal dispositions, the former may be established: but, be it remembered, the establishment of the exterior not only does not establish the interior, but the destruction of the last is previously essential to the establishment of the first.

No religion can be established without penal sanctions, and all penal sanctions in cases of religion are persecutions. Before a man can persecute, he must renounce the generous tolerant dispositions of a christian. No religion can be established without human creeds; and subscription to all human creeds implies two dispositions contrary to true religion, and both expressly forbidden by the Author of it. These two dispositions are, love of dominion over conscience in the imposer, and an abject preference of slavery in the subscriber. The first usurps the rights of Christ; the last swears allegiance to a pretender. The first domineers, and gives laws like a tyrant; the last truckles like a vassal. The first assumes a dominion incompatible with his frailty, impossible even to his dignity, yea, denied to the dignity of angels; the last yields a low submission, inconsistent with his own dignity, and ruinous to that very religion which he pretends by this means to support. Jesus Christ does not require, he does not allow, yea, he expressly forbids both these dispositions, well knowing, that an allowance of these would be a suppression of the finest dispositions of the human soul, and a degrading of revelation beneath the religion of nature. If human inventions have formerly secularized christianity, and rendered such bad dispositions necessary in times of ignorance, they ought to be exploded now, as all christians now allow this theory—The Son of God did not come to redeem one part of mankind to serve the secular views, and unworthy passions of the other: but he obtained freedom for both, that both *might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives*, Luke i. 74. 75. When churches reduce this theory to practice, they realize in actual life what otherwise makes only a fine idea decyphered in books, and by so doing they adorn their christianity with the glorious evidence of analogy.

Suppose the God of nature should think proper to reveal a simple system of astronomy, and to require all mankind to examine and believe this revelation on pain of his displeasure. Suppose one civil government, having examined this revelation, and explained the sense, in which they understood it, should endeavour to establish their explication by temporal rewards and punishments. Suppose they should require all their subjects to carry their infants in their arms to a public school, to answer certain astronomical interrogations, to be put by a professor of astronomy; as, in general, Wilt thou, Infant of eight years old; Wilt thou be an astronomer? Dost thou renounce all erroneous systems of astronomy? In particular, dost thou admit the true Copernican system? Dost thou believe the revealed explication of this system? And dost thou also believe that explication of this revelation, which certain of our own predecessors in the profession believed, which explication the government has adopted, and which we, your masters, and parents, in due obedience, receive? Suppose a proxy required to answer for this infant; All this, I, proxy for this child, do stedfastly believe; and suppose from this hour the child became a reputed astronomer. Suppose yet further, this child should grow to manhood, and in junior life should be pressed, on account of the obligation contracted in his infant state, to subscribe a certain paper called an astronomical creed, containing, mathematical definitions, astronomical propositions, and so on, and should be required for certain rewards to examine and approve, teach and defend this creed, and no other, without incurring the penalty of expulsion from all public schools, a deprivation of all honours, which he might be supposed on other accounts to merit, an expulsion from all offices of trust, credit, and profit, in some cases, a loss of property, and in others imprisonment, in others death. In this supposed case, I ask, would not the establishment of this system be an open violation of the doctrine of analogy, and should I not have a right to reason thus? The revelation itself is infallible, and the Author of it has given it me to examine: but the establishment of a given meaning of it renders examination needless, and perhaps dangerous. The God of nature has given me eyes, instruments, powers, and inclinations to use them; eyes, faculties, and dispositions as good as those of my

my ancestors, and instruments better : but all these advantages, which may be beneficial to me, if they confirm the truth of the explication, may be fatal to me, if they lag behind, or ken beyond the bound of the creed. Nature says, a constellation is a collection of stars, which in the heavens appear near to one another. This is a plain simple truth, I open my eyes, and admit the evidence. Revelation says, each fixt star is a sun, the centre of a system, consisting of planets inhabited by intelligent beings, who possess one sense and two faculties more than the inhabitants of this globe, and who worship the most high God in spirit and in truth. I cannot comprehend this whole proposition : but there is nothing in it contrary to the nature of things ; and I believe the truth of it on the testimony of the revealer. The established explication of this proposition is that of Ptolemy. He numbered the stars in the constellation Bootes, and found them, or supposed he found them, twenty-three, and this number I am to examine and approve, teach and defend against all opponents. What shall I say to Tycho, who affirms, Bootes contains only eighteen? Must I execrate Hevelius, who makes them fifty-two? After all, perhaps Flamsteed may be right ; he says there are fifty-four. Does not this method of teaching astronomy suppose a hundred absurdities? Does it not imply the imperfection of the revealed system, the infallibility of Ptolemy, the erroneousness of the other astronomers, the folly of examination, or the still greater madness of allowing a conclusion after a denial of the premises, from which it pretends to be drawn? When I was an infant, I am told, I was treated like a man; now I am a man, I am treated like an infant. I am an astronomer by proxy. The plan of God requires faculties, and the exercise of them, that of my country exchanges both for quiet submission. I am, and I am not, a believer of astronomy.

Were it affirmed, that a revelation from heaven established such a method of maintaining a science of speculation, reasoning, and practice, every rational creature would have a right to doubt the truth of such a revelation ; for it would violate the doctrine of analogy, by making the deity inconsistent with himself. But we will pursue this track no further ; we hope nothing said will be deemed illiberal ; we distinguish between a constitution of things, and many
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wife and good men, who submit to it, and we only venture to guess, if they be wise and good men under such inconveniences, they would be wiser and better men without them : at all adventures, if we ~~owe~~ much respect to men, we owe more to truth, to inconvertible unchangeable truth.

A second character of a divine revelation is *proportion*. By proportion I mean relative fitness, and, when I affirm, a divine revelation must bring along with it proportional evidence, I mean to say, it must appear to be exactly fitted to those intelligent creatures, for whose benefit it is intended. In the former article we required a similarity between the requisitions of God and the faculties of men ; in this we require an exact quantity of requisition commensurate with those faculties. The former regards the nature of a revelation ; this has for its object the limits of it. Were it possible for God, having formed a man only for walking, by a messenger from heaven to require him to fly, the doctrine of analogy would be violated by this requisition ; and were he to determine a prodigious space, through which he required him to pass in a given time, were he to describe an immense distance, and to enjoin him to move through it with a degree of velocity impossible to him, the doctrine of proportion would be violated, and the God of revelation would in both cases be made contradictory to the God of nature.

The christian revelation, we presume, answers all our just expectations on these articles ; for all the truths revealed by it are analagous to the nature of things, and every article in it bears an exact proportion to the abilities of all those, for whose benefit it is given. Our Saviour treats of the doctrine of proportion in the parable of the talents, and supposes the Lord to apportion the number of talents, when he bestows them, and the rewards and punishments, which he distributes for the use, and abuse of them, to the *several ability* of each servant, Matt. xxv. 14. St. Paul depicts the primitive church in all the beauty of this proportional economy ; *the same God worketh all diversities of operations in all differences of administrations, dividing to every man severally as he will*, 1 Cor. xii. 5, 6, 11. This economy, he says, assimilates the christian church to the human body, and gives to the one as to the other strength, symmetry, and beauty, evidently

dently proving that the author of creation is the author of redemption, framing both by one uniform rule of analogy and proportion.

Full of these just notions, we examine that description of revelation, which human creeds exhibit, and we perceive at once, they are all destitute of proportional evidence. They all consist of multifarious propositions, each of which is considered as essential to the whole, and the belief of all essential to an enjoyment of the benefits of christianity, yea to those of civil society, in this life, and to a participation of eternal life in the world to come. In this case the free gifts of God to all are monopolized by a few, and sold out to the many at a price, far greater than nine-tenths of them can pay, and at a price, which the remaining part ought not to pay, because the donor has not empowered these salesmen to exact any price, because by his original grant all are made joint proprietors, and because the payment would be at once a renunciation of their right to hold the original grant, and of their lord's prerogative to bestow.

(To be continued.)

An Abstract of Watts's Rational Foundation of a Christian Church.

(Continued from Page 51.)

BUT it may be replied here, that the abuse of authority does not prove there is no such authority. Even so in churches, the power may be abused; yet surely, there must be some persons who have power and authority, and rule, and government, lodged in their hands, ever since the days of inspiration, and extraordinary commission: for without it, every society will run into great disorder and confusion. Pray what is this rule or power of government, which is granted to ordinary ministers, in a christian church; and wherein does it consist, if not in appointing such things as Christ has left indifferent? To
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this I answer, 1. The rule and government which is committed to *ordinary* ministers in the church, so far as I can understand, it seems to consist in these things following: viz. in going before the people, and leading the several parts of their worship, and becoming their example in every duty; in teaching them the principles and rules of their religion. It consists in exhorting, persuading, and charging the hearers with solemnity, in the name and authority of Christ, to comply therewith; in presiding in their assemblies; and particularly, as to the admission or exclusion of members: in watching over their flock, and guarding them against errors and dangers. But I cannot any where find, that our blessed Lord has given them any power, or pretence of power, to impose on conscience, any such advices of their own, which neither reason nor revelation impose, much less to impose any of their own inventions, of new doctrines or duties; or so much as their own peculiar explications of the words of Christ, by their own authority. When our Saviour gave commission to his apostles, to preach the gospel to all nations, it was in this manner: Go, teach them to observe (not whatsoever you shall command, but) whatsoever I have commanded you, Matt. xxviii. 20.

Since Christ is the only Lord of his own church, whose wisdom is infallible, and whose power and authority are unquestionable, it is very unreasonable to suppose, that he should leave any part of the doctrines and duties of christianity to be invented, or imposed upon his churches, by men, whose best wisdom and knowledge are weak, and fallible, and uncertain, and their authority so doubtful and questionable, or rather so null and void, as to any inventions and impositions of their own.

Alas! what wretched work would such a supposed authority make in different churches, in the same age? what contentions and endless confusions would be raised among christians? what eternal innovations in churches, as to their faith, and worship, and practice, when pastors die successively, and others of different principles come in their room? What mischiefs, strifes, schisms, would arise in the same churches, by the different sentiments and injunctions of different elders and pastors of the same church? Observe with what zeal St. Paul ex-claims

claims against any such sort of power, even in himself and his fellow teachers, 1 Cor. i. 12—iii. 5. 2 Cor. i. 24.

As for lesser things, which Christ has not commanded, and which are necessary to be determined in the church, as in any other human society, such as the appointment of the place and hour of meeting, the chusing a president, the method and order of their religious exercises, &c. these must be consented to by the society itself. A judge in a court, or a magistrate in a city, has no power to make any new law: his business is only to explain and apply, in general, the laws which are made, according to the best of his understanding; and after all, it is a jury of twelve men, in our national courts of justice, that determine the affair, with respect to the particular things and persons. So ministers in the church, are not lords, or sovereigns in Christ's kingdom. They, in their highest character, can only be supposed to be set up as judges, to explain his laws, and apply them to rising occasions, and shew men how to do all things decently, and in order. But in many cases of church affairs, it is the people that must actually apply them to particular persons or occurrences. Ministers have not any dominion given them, either over our faith or practice.

It may be observed also, that the names which are given to ministers, do not signify sovereign rule and authority. Their names are *ministers*, or *servants*, and they are never called *lords*, or *commanders*; but *leaders*, *presidents*, *stewards*, *shepherds*, *teachers*, *elders*, *overseers*, &c. all which intimate a limited authority, and not a supreme power. But as many writers among the Puritans and Non-conformists, have handled this matter abundantly in the last age, so the reverend and learned Bishop Hoadley, in later years, has happily laboured to guard this prerogative of Christ, to make laws in his own church, from the usurpation of men, and therefore I insist no further on this particular.

5. Though the scripture be silent about the extent of the power of particular bishops, or elders in a church, yet, some may say, Does not the light of nature teach us, that *many wise and gracious persons, the bishops and elders of many churches, meeting together in a synod, or solemn council, may join and make laws, or constitutions for all the churches*

churches under their care? And are not the churches bound to obey?

First, I answer, It is granted that the light of nature would lead the wisest persons sometimes to meet together for mutual advice and counsel; but I know not of any natural or scriptural right, that ministers, joined in a synod, have to make new laws for christian churches; *nor have single christians or congregations any right or leave, much less an obligation to subject themselves, and their consciences to such a dominion of men, in things which neither scripture nor nature requires.* It is the ready way, by degrees, to put other kings into the kingdom of Christ, who alone is Sovereign in his church. It is a dangerous thing for christians to give up themselves to the will of fallible men; by such subjection they will find, by woeful experience, many things, by degrees, imposed upon them, that will neither suit with their conscience nor conveniency, with their own inclinations, or their faithful subjection to Christ. What has been the event of this in all ages, may justly be again expected, if the same experiment be made.

I answer, 2dly, If these were once allowed, may not those ministers, thus met together in one nation, upon the same principle, depute some of their number to join with such sort of deputation of christian ministers in other nations, till at last they devolve all their power upon one small assembly, or general council; or upon one single person, who may be deputed or appointed, to determine for them all? If these sort of deputations, carry any authority or power with them to make laws for consciences, they may be carried on as far as an universal council, or a *Pope*, before they stop, and we are at Rome before we are aware.

You will reply, perhaps, Is there not some encouragement given to the government of the church by assemblies, councils, convocations, or synods of bishops and elders, in that famous chapter, Acts 15; where they met about that great question, "Whether the heathen converts should be circumcised or not?" But the answer is very easy: This was not a council of elders or bishops, for here are the Brethren of the church at Jerusalem, joined together with the apostles and elders; and besides, that assembly had so much of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, that they could justly say, "It seemed

seemed good unto the Holy Ghost and to us." Now when persons divinely inspired, as those apostles and elders were, shall meet together for such a purpose, I have nothing to say against their determinations. But let ministers in their councils, in later ages, take heed how they assume lordship over conscience, till they are furnished with such divine gifts, and can make such a divine commission to appear, as will warrant them to say, "It appeared good to the Holy Ghost and to us," to appoint so and so.

Perhaps it will be replied here, that probably the providence of God so ordered it, that even inspired apostles should meet and debate this point in a synod, on purpose to teach all succeeding churches, how their difficulties and controversies should be authoritatively determined by synods to the end of the world.

Answer. I will allow, that Providence might perhaps appoint this council to teach the churches in following ages, what they should do in difficult cases; (i. e.) that they should meet together, and advise with one another, and debate matters freely and sincerely, according to that great rule of human prudence, "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." And great deference should be paid to the advice of many aged, learned, and pious men, met in council. But if no inspired men are among them, they can only draw up their conclusion thus, "*It seemed good to us* (fallible men) *to give our opinion, or advice so or so;*" but they are not to determine absolutely for other persons, and make rules to bind the consciences of others, unless they could add, "*It seemed good unto the Holy Spirit also, as well as unto us:*" for if the vote of a council of fallible men should bind us, why could not the council of Trent, or any other councils, bind us to all their antichristian decrees? The best constituted church or council, may in time grow degenerate, and if they have such authority given them, they may make *heathenish or hellish* decrees, and bind them on the consciences of men.

And yet further, in the third place, I add, if this decree at Jerusalem, had not been the direction and determination of the Holy Spirit, by the lips of inspired men, why should the churches at Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia (Acts xv. 23) submit to a vote or opinion of the church at Jerusalem, any more than the church at Jerusalem should

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submit to an opinion of the church at Corinth, or Rome, or Antioch? What was done at Jerusalem by inspired men once, on an extraordinary occasion, cannot be made a binding example or rule, for the determination of conscience in all following times, and in ordinary church affairs, where no inspired persons are present; for by this precedent, one church would have power given it to determine for another, which I know no church pretends to, but that of Rome.

And finally, it is plain, if this scripture gives authority to uninspired men in ordinary cases, it gives this dominion to the *whole church at Jerusalem*, and not to the bishops or elders only; for this was not a council made up of the elders, bishops, or representatives of the churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, but of the apostles, elders, and brethren of the church at Jerusalem; and yet they authoritatively determined the case for the churches of the Gentiles, which they should never have done, if there had been no apostles, or inspired persons there.

Whatsoever therefore the church at Jerusalem determined, as a duty for the Gentile churches to practise in a dubious case, because it had apostles, and many inspired persons in it, can be no sufficient authority for synods, convocations, or councils of elders of modern churches, to determine other dubious cases, for their own or other congregations, and bind their consciences to any point of faith or practice, merely by their authority.

Christian churches formed like civil societies, upon the plain nature and reason of things.

Permit me here to give a little specimen, by way of similitude, how naturally a christian church is formed, when we suppose there are several christians within the reach and knowledge of one another, in this sinful world. It is raised in the same manner as any other civil society may be formed among men, especially among several natives of one country meeting together in a foreign land: And while I am representing their procedure, you may carry your thoughts of the formation and constitution of a christian church along with you in the simile, and apply it all the way.

Suppose

Suppose three or four Englishmen, who have their residence in a city of China, happen to meet one another, and by conversation, finding that they speak the same language, they make it known to each other, that they are natives of the same country; they all profess allegiance to the same King, George II. and though they sojourn for a season in a foreign land, and are engaged in many secular affairs there, yet they declare their resolution to behave as becomes Englishmen, while they are waiting for a call from their sovereign to return home. They hereupon agree to meet once a week, in order to converse about the affairs of their own nation, to learn some tidings from it, to pay some special honours to their absent king, to learn further notices of his will, and to prepare for their return homeward.

The day which they appoint for their assembly, is the day of the accession of their king to the throne, in its weekly return: The place is also agreed among them, such as may be convenient for their frequent attendance.

Other Englishmen, who are in that city, hearing of this society, come to their assembly, one after another, and desire acquaintance with their countrymen and brethren: They make it appear, that they are natives of the same land, that they own the same sovereign, that they are doing his will, and preparing to return home at his orders: And, in the mean time, they desire the privilege of being admitted into their society. Upon such a profession, and by the approbation of the society, they are received into this English fellowship with pleasure.

Now it is not to be supposed, that every one of them is capable of taking proper care of the best interests of this society, nor of speaking in an instructive and profitable manner concerning the things that relate to their native country, their laws, and rules of conduct, their king, and their common design of a return.

They agree therefore, to chuse one person amongst them, who shall devote himself to this work, shall study the laws of their country, the rules of the proper behaviour of Englishmen, and the mind and will of their king: One who shall present their common allegiance to their sovereign, in frequent addresses sent to England, and shall spend an hour or two every week, in setting before them what honours they owe to the king of England, what are the blessings of their native home, what are their duties in a

foreign land, what dangers they are exposed to among the heathen Chinese, and how they may best avoid them ; what are the enjoyments they expect at their return, and the best methods of preparation for it. This man accepts the office, and, by a solemn vow of allegiance to the king, and faithfulness to his countrymen, in this trust, he enters upon his office.

Besides this, once in a month, suppose they meet together, according to an appointment of their prince, to eat a morsel of bread, and drink a glass of wine together, in memory of some great benefit which the whole nation of England received by a difficult and bloody enterprize of the king's son, when, in former years, he took a voyage from England to China ; and they keep up this feast, in honour of his name, wherein the provisions, after a short speech, are distributed to every member of the society, by the person whom they have appointed to instruct them in English affairs.

Now, because this man spends a great part of his time in letters or dispatches to England, and in the study of English affairs, that he may the better entertain the assembly of his brethren at their solemn weekly meetings, the community agree to release him from the secular businesses of life, and join their liberality to maintain him with honour.

But here let it be observed, that though they pay so much respect to the person whom they chuse to be their instructor, and to go before them in the honours due to their king, yet they do not intrust him to invent any new ceremony to testify their allegiance, nor to impose on them any new law or custom, but what he can find prescribed among the laws of their nation, and appointments of the king, or of his ambassadors to China. In these matters, indeed, he may require obedience in the name of the king ; but in all other things, he must act according to the agreement or opinion of the society ; which must be testified by the vote of the major part.

Among this community, some happen to be aged, or sick, or disabled for work, or they are fallen into poverty, and their circumstances are sunk in the world, notwithstanding their diligence and labour : These are not capable of maintaining themselves ; the society therefore chearfully contribute towards their support. And they en-

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trust two or three persons with this money, and desire them to take care that the table of the poor be supplied. They entrust also with these persons what money they collect for the honourable maintenance of their teacher; and desire them to take care, that every thing necessary toward their weekly meetings, at a certain time, and at a convenient place be provided at their public charge. They go on in this manner with much comfort and mutual assistance, in every thing that relates to their welfare in a foreign land; and rejoice in the hope to meet one day in England.

And as they are ever adding to their society by admitting new members, upon their credible profession and appearance to be true Britons, in the room of such as are yearly called home; so if any among them prove to be false and insincere, and are guilty of crimes highly disgraceful to their profession of being natives of England, and their allegiance to their king, they have no other punishment for them besides that they are cut off from the society, and forbid to enjoy the privileges thereof any longer.

Now it is so very easy to apply these transactions of Englishmen in China to the affairs of a christian church, that I hardly need display the parallel. Christians profess to be natives of heaven, to be born from above: They sojourn for a season in the world as in a foreign land, till their Father and King summons them home. They speak the language of the gospel, or of the kingdom of heaven, and understand it; and they know each other hereby: They agree to meet together to worship their King, and pay allegiance to him; to learn more of his will, and seek his favour. The day of their solemn assemblies is the day of the resurrection of Christ, the Son of God, and their Lord. When they do special honours to him, they eat bread and drink wine, to solemnize the memory of their deliverance from sin and hell, when he was sent into the world to die for them. Then, by calling away their hearts from this world, and conversing about heavenly things, they are continually preparing for their return home. They choose one or more teachers, pastors, or bishops, to instruct them in their duty, and to offer up their common addresses to God, in the name of Christ; to put them in mind of the things

of heaven, and to walk before them in exemplary holiness. They choose deacons to relieve the poor, out of their public liberality, as well as to take care that their pastors or teachers be maintained. They receive in new members who are worthy, upon their profession; and they cast out those that are dishonourable. They walk onward in this way toward the heavenly state; and wait the summons from on high, to call them thither by death and the resurrection.

(To be continued.)

Remarks on the Minutes of the last Conference.

(Continued from page 65.)

THERE is something very mysterious in the account the conference has published on the preachers' fund. In one place they say, "It appears from the state of the account relating to the preachers' fund, now laid before us, that the amount, if in our own hands, or in any of the funds, from whence regular interest would be paid, would have been 6000*l*. But this whole sum (except about 70*l*.) is all expended in the payment of Mr. *Wesley's* debts, and in carrying on the work before and since his death." In another place they declare, "No part of this fund shall be applied to any other purposes than those directed by these rules: and all monies that have been borrowed from it, shall be repaid with legal interest."

Mr. *Wesley*, many years before his death, had recourse to this fund, to supply deficiencies. He took the allowance of a number of wives from it. As the other funds would not supply the wants of the different circuits, he thought the surplus of the preachers' fund had better be applied this way, than put out to interest. He never imagined after his death, that the preachers would attempt to have the money back with legal interest, which he took from the fund, to help forward the work. But since his death, in one of the conferences, a majority of the preach-

ers determined to have every sixpence back, which he had taken from the fund, with legal interest. Mr. *Wesley's* legacy to his brother's family, the expences of the lawsuit, and the money taken from the fund in Mr. *Wesley's* life, with what they have in hand, would make up the 6000l. they name. By the account published in the first of these passages, it is held out to the people, as though the whole of this sum, except 70l. was entirely sunk, in carrying on the work: and that they have no expectation of receiving any of it again. But in the last passage they positively declare, "All monies that have been borrowed from the fund, shall be repaid with legal interest." Now, though the preachers have only seventy pounds in hand, have they not the whole stock of books, with the printing presses, &c. to fly to for security? And should the connexion be broken up the next conference, is there not a sufficiency of property to indemnify the preachers? And since the conference declare, they will have the whole repaid with legal interest, it is evident they can only be paid by the book-room. Were they to manage their own affairs to advantage, and let the profits of the book-room be applied for three years to pay off this 6000l. with legal interest, should the sale of books be as extensive as it has been for the last three years, it is very probable, the whole would be paid in that time. Instead of the conference declaring, they had only 70l. in hand, ought they not to have told us, that they had the security of the book-room for the 6000l. which is more than sufficient to indemnify them. 'This would have enabled our friends to have seen the state of our fund at once, and have led them to conclude, how far the scriptures require them to subscribe in future, to an institution, which is amply sufficient to support itself, if the legal interest be regularly paid, and the preachers continue to subscribe one guinea a year towards its support.

I am charged with injuring the character of Mr. *Wesley*, in the account which the conference have published of my trial. But have not the preachers injured Mr. *Wesley's* character abundantly more, by publishing, that they were obliged to pay his debts, with the money that was subscribed to support superannuated preachers? Did Mr. *Wesley* die insolvent? Did he leave any debts

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to pay, which his books were not amply sufficient to defray? The legacy to Mrs. *Wesley* cannot be called with propriety a debt. The benefit of Mr. *Charles's* writings, (especially his hymns) to the connexion, cannot be estimated. Were 1700*l.* more than the advantage we have received from them, since they were first written? If Mr. *Wesley* left legacies and debts to pay, to the amount of 2000*l.* Did he not leave between 8 and 10,000*l.* in property, in the different book-rooms? It is supposed by those that knew the state of Mr. *Wesley's* book-stock at his death, that to the preachers, it could not be worth less than 8000*l.* But supposing it were only worth four, would not this more than pay Mr. *Wesley's* legacies and debts? Have not the preachers, then, by publishing the above mentioned account, really injured the character of our venerable father? and if what I have published of Mr. *Wesley*, which was brought as a capital offence, and made use of for my condemnation and expulsion, be little in comparison of what they have published, ought they not at least, to be called to give an account of their conduct in this matter?

9. Lastly, In their address to the preachers in Ireland, we have this remarkable passage: "You will join us in praising our adorable God and Saviour, for the peace and unanimity we enjoy. This is the rather to be remarked at present, as our common enemy has endeavoured to sow discord among us. In a few places we feared our people would have been divided and scattered, by false notions of our constitution being artfully and industriously propagated among them. Glory be to God, our adversaries have been defeated, and we have reason to believe good will be brought out of the evil."

Upon this passage let us make the following remarks:

1. The Newcastle address, my pamphlets, the Plymouth Dock letter, &c. have never been fairly answered.—The notions we propagated upon the present constitution of Methodism, have never been confuted. They are supported by scripture and reason. Messrs. *Benson*, *Mather*, *Pawson*, and *Crowther*, have done every thing in their power to prove our notions false; but the answers to Mr. *Benson*, and Messrs. *Mather* and *Pawson*, sufficiently establish every thing we had formerly asserted on our constitution. 2. Have we endeavoured to sow discord among the

the brethren, or have we attempted to be of service to the different societies throughout the connexion? Have we not pointed out real *existing evils*, and called upon the preachers and people to come forward, redress the grievances complained of, and fix a constitution mutually agreed upon, calculated to satisfy all parties? We deny the charge of either publishing false notions, or endeavouring to sow discord among the people. 3. If the conference mean their own peace and unanimity, this may account for their calling upon the Irish preachers to join them in praising God. But what sort of a peace and unanimity is this? Many of the preachers went to the conference resolved to seek a redress of grievances, and to have a better plan established. But the preachers that manage our affairs opposed so violently, that they saw it necessary to conform to the ruling party, and drop their notions of a reform. I am bold to aver, that the peace and unanimity mentioned in this passage, in respect to many of the preachers, was only in appearance; extorted by the influence of the ruling party. Our people, for several years, have been so accustomed to hear of the glorious conferences that the preachers have had, and the peace and unanimity that have prevailed, that they expect something of this now, both from the pulpit and the press, as soon as a conference is ended. But they are exceedingly grieved and mortified to find, before many weeks have elapsed after a conference, the preachers are at war with each other. It appears, however, that the peace and unanimity mentioned in this place, refer to the several societies in the connexion. How the preachers could publish such a declaration, is very astonishing. At the time of the conference, there never was a greater agitation known in the connexion, than was manifest at that period; and since the conference, the agitation is so very much increased, that many begin to doubt whether peace and unanimity will ever be known among us again, unless the preachers will come forward cheerfully, and sacrifice their undue power and influence; at the same time, fixing on a plan that will satisfy all parties. 4. Have the preachers indeed vanquished, what they call their common enemy in this matter? Or are the friends who are seeking a reform in our constitution, increasing in number and in strength?

strength? Is not this passage calculated to deceive and impose upon the Irish brethren? Are they not called upon to praise God for what does not exist in the connexion? Can we suppose, that several passages in the address to America, and in this to Ireland, are any ways calculated to promote the glory of God? Are not expressions found in them both, that would lead the preachers in those parts to mourn, did they know, how contrary they are to the present state of Methodism in England?

I hope these remarks upon the minutes, will help our people to see the real state of our affairs, and to come forward cheerfully and boldly to claim their just rights. If this be done in the spirit of the gospel, the happiest consequences are sure to follow. May the God of our mercies enable us to act according to his will in all things, that we may glorify his name here, and praise him for ever!

LEEDS, Oct. 21, 1796.

A. K.

N. B. Last year, many of the brethren complained, that after half of the preachers had left the conference, a number of laws were made, which they never heard of till they saw them in the minutes. Several of the preachers that attended the late conference, solemnly declare, they never heard of some of the rules enacted last August, till they saw them in print. They are exceedingly grieved at the idea of their sanctioning that rule which forbids the people to meet, before the conference appoint their meeting. While a few persons are allowed to stay later than their brethren, and make what laws they please, to bind them and the people, can it be supposed, that our friends, or the preachers that were not present, can be satisfied? It appears that the *select few* who made some of the rules which are printed this year, foresaw what would be objected against their measures, and have therefore, by a *law of their own*, provided against it. They say, "Whoever leave the conference before all the business is finished, and the journals signed, must not complain whatever may be done after their departure." This rule is designed effectually to stop the mouths of all that complain, and to sanction the measures that a few have taken upon themselves to establish. When shall we be able to declare, "That in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."

REMARKS

REMARKS

On Messrs. Matber and Pawson's late Publication, entitled, "An Affectionate Address."

"And Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said,
 "I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst
 "not shew you mine opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of
 "years should teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man: and the
 "inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Great men
 "are not always wise; neither do the aged understand judgment.
 "Therefore, I said, Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion.—
 "The Spirit within me constraineth me.—I will speak that I may
 "be refreshed: I will open my lips, and answer. Let me not, I
 "pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering
 "titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so
 "doing, my Maker would soon take me away." Job xxxii. 6, 7, 8,
 9, 10, 18, 20, 21, 22.

IT is very difficult in controversy, to keep from every thing that would prevent our sentiments from being properly considered. When we suffer our bad tempers to discover themselves in every page, and supply our want of argument by calling names, a certain description of hearers may be pleased, but the sensible and the pious will mourn. Our affairs are now before the world, and will be examined by thousands that are not connected with us. Were we to manage our present controversy, as the religion of the New Testament directs, we should not prejudice our readers against the doctrines of the gospel, but might induce them to yield to be saved by grace through faith. A manly support of our sentiments in *strong language*, cannot be deemed unchristian. We only incur the displeasure of God, and the reproach of our fellow-creatures, when we make use of sophistical arguments, calculated to deceive, and so far mingle our evil dispositions

dispositions with what we deliver, as to abuse and persecute those who venture to differ from us in judgment; and who have both wisdom and courage, to detect our errors. I hope, by the grace of God, not to render evil for evil to any man. At the same time, every candid reader will allow me the privilege of defending my sentiments, against the attacks of any that violently oppose.

Messrs. *Mather* and *Pawson* are respectable for their years, and for their long-continued exertions, in publishing the good tidings of salvation. Happy would it have been for them both, if the precious truths they have so long pressed upon others, had so far influenced their own tempers, as to have prevented that bitterness which is so conspicuous in the pamphlet before us! Perhaps they think they do well to be angry on the occasion. Great allowance must be made for their years, their present peculiar situation, and their particular views of the subjects that now agitate us. Should these worthy brethren take up their pen to defend their sentiments in future, perhaps they will learn wisdom by what they have suffered, and let their piety and moderation be known to all.

Messrs. *Mather* and *Pawson* have travelled many years in our connexion. Compared with many of the brethren, they may justly be called fathers in our community. It has been observed by many, that two things are peculiarly manifest, in a certain description of fathers, 1. A great proneness to speak in strong language of what they have done; and to be rather too forward in praising themselves. 2. Treating with severity those of their children, that attempted to point out any thing wrong in their conduct. Some have carried this matter so far, as to banish from their family any son, that would not be obsequious to their will. How far these worthy brethren have acted this part, may be gathered from their expressions. Let us examine what they have said of themselves. Several of the passages are in the plaintive strain. The reader will excuse their being rather long, considering the pamphlet they are quoted from:

“Bad as mankind in the general are, yet there are still a few, at least, who make conscience of what they do: The language of whose hearts is, “Thou God seest me,” and therefore

therefore act as in his sight, with a single eye, and an upright heart; and it would be lamentable indeed, if such were not to be found among those who are held up as the transactors of our public affairs, seeing that these have been of the longest standing in the connexion, and their piety, labours, and usefulness, have been as seldom called in question, as that of any of their brethren."—— Speaking on the reflections cast out against them respecting the London law-suit, they say, "These men would have been much nearer the truth if they had said, "It is evident, that there are men among the Methodist preachers, who greatly interest themselves in all the affairs of the connexion, and who on every distressing occasion, labour day and night for its welfare, and who strain every nerve in order to remove such heavy burthens, as that occasioned by this unhappy law-suit, by such means as to be under the disagreeable, and perhaps fruitless necessity, to ask us to assist them." This would have done them credit, and would have been the naked truth. "But at any rate, let no one blame those who have laboured as for life, in order to make peace, to heal the wound, and to remove that rock of offence out of the way. However, we have this satisfaction, if our salvation had depended upon it, we could not have done better. The above is as clear an account as we could give of that unfortunate affair, We had rather have said nothing at all about it, a matter so exceedingly painful; but these persons have obliged us; if they will still blame us, as it is most likely they will, we can only say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."——"Money was never the object that the old Methodist preachers had in view, and we are happy to say, that the young preachers, in general, are of the same spirit! They laboured as faithfully when there was no fund at all as they do now. They had the interests of the people as much at heart when there was no fixed quarterage, for either themselves or their families, as ever Mr. K—— did at any time, who in the very first stage of his travels, entered into present pay, and good quarters."——"With what supreme contempt has Mr. K—— treated several of those venerable men, who were labouring in the vineyard before he was born?" The following is pitiful indeed: "Bre-

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thren, for God's sake, consider whereunto all this jealousy and evil-furmiscing tends. Open your eyes, before it be too late. Do not drive all the honest and pious men among us out of the vineyard. Consider we have our trials still. Do not so greatly increase them; we have not deserved this at your hands. Alas, brethren! will you break the hearts of your old tried servants, not to say fathers, who have faithfully laboured for your good for thirty or forty years. We would ask any reasonable man under heaven, If the preachers are not the proper representatives of the people, who are? Who, in the name of common sense, are so likely to have their real interests at heart, as their spiritual fathers." These, and several other passages, treat of what they have done, and what they expect on account of it.

Let us now, in the second place, attend a little to the language they make use of, respecting a disobedient son, that was not sufficiently obsequious to their will. In the title page, they call the charges he has printed, "False accusations." In the first page they insinuate that he is a knave.—"We believe it will generally hold good, that none are so apt to suspect others of bad designs, and dishonest practices, as those persons are who have such designs themselves, and who feel they would act in that line, if they had but the opportunity so to do, which they see others have." Speaking on the book-room, they ask, "What has Mr. K——, with all his boasting, contributed towards it?" He doubled and tribled the number of subscribers for the magazine in the first circuit where he was an assistant, and in Alnwick, raised them from eighty-seven, to one hundred and fifty-three. The following irony must not be overlooked:—"It must be acknowledged, to his praise, that Mr. K—— can write in a very extraordinary, that is to say, in a very unreasonable manner, as much so, perhaps, as any of his neighbours; and some others have copied his example; and people there are weak, or wicked enough, to believe what they say. But as to our part, we have our doubts whether he is not a man of that description, such as the apostle says, would arise in the church, speaking perverse things, in order to draw disciples after him."—"What is it that has rendered Mr. K—— so popular? One would almost think that

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the days of Dr. Sacheverel were returned, and that Mr. K—— had learned of that mad Doctor to cry, "*The church is in danger.*" We think it will puzzle the reader (not a little) to find out any thing extraordinary in what he has published, except an extraordinary degree of assurance, impertinence, insolence, and uncharitableness, unequalled by any man that ever bore the name of a Methodist." [Is it worse than Mr. Michael Moorehouse's letter and pamphlet?] Speaking upon their forwardness to make suitable rules, they say, "But it must be very painful to them, after the labours of so many years, and being fully conscious that they have not been seeking their own ease, honour, or wealth, to be represented by a mere stripling, one who has entered into the fruit of their labours, as a company of tyrannical, mercenary, self-seeking hypocrites!!!" In the next passage, we have another specimen of their attacking the passions of their readers:—"Will you follow this poor, vain, self-sufficient young man, who labours so mightily to prejudice your minds against the very men who brought you to God? He says many plausible things, it must be acknowledged, respecting the preachers making rules to govern you without your consent." Again: "Supposing any one had taken charge of the yearly collection, at the sum printed in the minutes this very year, when so extraordinary a mistake has been made, what would Mr. K—— and his friends have said? Nay, what have not some said of them already. May we not follow so laudable an example as that of Mr. K——, and say, O christian charity! into what frozen region art thou fled?" I shall finish this selection with a passage that crowns the whole. "There are many other things in his pamphlets equally false, and might with equal ease be confuted. Let any serious christian consider the pernicious tendency of his wretched tracts, and then let them say, whether the preachers could, with a good conscience, suffer a man so dangerous to the peace and well-being of society, to remain among them." Only examine these declarations, and ask, if these brethren have not deprived me of my senses, morality, and piety, and described me to be one of the worst wretches that ever lived? I hope, from my heart, I can offer to God the

prayer they have quoted:—" Lord, forgive them, they know not what they do."

Let us now examine the following very curious passage: " One might suppose from his prodigious assurance, which so evidently appears upon the face of all that he writes, that no man ever came among us so well recommended, or that had been so faithful as himself. But alas! Mr. K—— only came in at the back-door, according to his own extraordinary plan. He was neither recommended by the stewards, leaders, preachers, or people, but only by a respectable individual, with whom he had travelled a short time, in the capacity of a servant. And seeing, that with so slight a recommendation, he has acquitted himself so *nobly*, as every one must be constrained to acknowledge, who reads what he has published to the world; why should he (above all others) be so greatly concerned respecting those who travel now? Why should they be any better recommended than he himself was? Surely this would come with a much better grace from some other person than Mr. K——! But has Mr. K—— really been of any extraordinary use in our connexion? Let any one examine the minutes, as to the places where he has laboured, and then they will be able to judge. We would ask his most profound admirers, Were there ever any particular revival of the work by his ministry? Or did ever any one circuit in the three kingdoms, petition for him to labour among them? We confess that we remember nothing of the kind, and are half inclined to think that no one else does." Upon these words I shall beg the reader's attention to three remarks.

1. Suppose that in the times of my ignorance I had come in " at the back-door," by " the recommendation of a respectable individual," is this any reason why I should justify " back-door" entrance, now that I am better informed, when a fore-door may be opened by the preachers and people, to admit every person of abilities for the work, who has a respectable character? If the " back-door" admits very improper persons, why should it remain open, when a more excellent door may be opened? I shall state a few facts respecting my admission, and leave the reader to judge, how far these venerable fathers had a right solemnly to declare, " He was neither recommended by the stewards, leaders, preachers, or people?

people?" In the year 1783, I went to travel with Mr. *Brackenbury*, in the same capacity that Mr. *Bradford* travelled with Mr. *Wesley*. At the conference in 1784, he offered to recommend me to Mr. *Wesley* and the preachers to travel. I thanked him for his kindness, but refused to accept of his offer. In a few weeks after the conference, he determined to go to the south of France, and offered either to let me stay at his hall, in Lincolnshire, or go to the isle of Jersey, and wait till he should arrive there. I chose the latter. Four preachers were appointed for the Grimsby circuit, but only three came. Mr. *Duften*, the assistant, (whose name will ever be dear to me, on account of his liberality of sentiment, and uprightness of conduct) offered to place me as a travelling preacher in the circuit, about the first quarter day, but I refused to comply with his request, and with that of the friends. As my time was entirely at my own disposal, I offered to supply the Sunday places, and help them as much as possible at other times. One of the preachers was soon confined by the ague. I supplied his place regularly for several weeks. At length, I consented to the intreaties of the preachers and people, and helped them regularly as an extra-preacher. The providence of God appeared to direct my way. The preachers recommended me to travel. Most of the people in every place did the same. At the quarterly meeting, held in Longham-row, June, 1785, the brethren there recommended me. Mr. *Duften* recommended me to the conference, from the certain knowledge he had of the kindness of the people to me, and from a conviction, that I might be acceptable and useful in the vineyard of Christ. Now, so far from Mr. *Brackenbury* recommending me to travel, he was in the south of France, and did not know that I was recommended at all, till several weeks after that conference. I hope these brethren made use of this unguarded declaration through ignorance or prejudice, and did not wilfully and deliberately publish this false account of my coming out to travel.

2. They ask, "Has Mr. K—— really been of any extraordinary use to the connexion?" And answer by saying, "Let any one examine the minutes, as to the places where he has laboured, and then they will be able to judge?" Are the numbers on the minutes an infalli-

ble rule to judge by, respecting the usefulness of a preacher? Is it not well known, that many assistants give in a greater number on the minutes than their successors can find in their circuits? And among those that are found on the minutes, does it not often happen, that many are left in the circuit-book, who are obliged to be put out of connexion for their immoral conduct? It is sometimes painful to speak the truth, when it is even extorted. It is well known in the conference, that in regard to many circuits, if the assistant give in an increase of number, and an increase in the collections, these are certain marks of a prosperous circuit, by many in the conference. It often happens, however, that were such preachers determined to put out immoral persons from the different societies, whom the people consider as a reproach to Methodism, their number would be less than that which they received from their predecessor. And were the steps published which are pursued in collecting money from a number of simple people, many of the preachers in conference would be exceedingly mortified. If no rapid revival has been manifest in the circuits where I have travelled, could I, or my brethren command the influences of the Spirit? If there be any blame on this head, should the whole be laid to my charge, or they be allowed to bear part with me? I am happy to observe, that I have never yet travelled in a circuit, without having some seals to my ministry.

3. They ask farther, "Or did ever any one circuit in the three kingdoms petition for him to labour among them? We confess we remember nothing of the kind, and are half inclined to think that no one else does?"—It often happens that petitions for preachers going into circuits are made by the influence of an individual, or a few persons. And these petitions have sometimes been artfully obtained. The body of the people have been left out of sight. To obtain the best circuits by such means, would be a sacrifice that I could never stoop to make. In Scarbro' circuit Mr. *Wesley* was petitioned, and I was appointed to stay a second year. In Aberdeen, the people in general wished me to stay a second and a third year, and had their petitions granted. If the voice of three-fourths of the people in the circuits where I have travelled since I was accepted into full connexion could have been heard, and attended to, there is not a circuit

cuit but what would have petitioned for my return. We have a strange method, almost established by general custom, to continue assistants a second year. If the people wish and pray for their removal, it often happens, that they are continued, for no other reason, but because they are assistants. At the same time, their colleagues, who are earnestly solicited to continue a second year, cannot have this privilege, because they are not superintendants. In this matter, the voice of the people, as it respects a number of circuits, is not the least attended to. I am sorry that I have been constrained to take up so much room in replying to this passage. For Messrs. *Mather* and *Parson* to have recourse to such pitiful shifts to injure my character, is a proof, that every means is made use of that can be devised, to strengthen a tottering cause. Attempts of this nature are calculated to work upon the passions of the ignorant and weak, and may lead them to join in the cry, "The cause of God is at stake;" but sensible persons of every denomination will see through the scheme, and abhor it for ever.

In another place they say, "What a prodigious outcry does Mr. K—— make, in the account he has given of his late trial, about a copy of the charges brought against him by the conference being denied him, when at the same time, he was repeatedly told, that every one of those charges were taken from his own books. And in order to satisfy him, the books were given to him, where every part was marked which contained those charges. So that this was exactly the same to him as a written copy. Nay more, when he has so loudly complained of the injustice of the conference in withholding a copy from him, he had the books marked as before mentioned, put into his hands by a member of the conference. In the name of all that is sacred, what has this wonderful reformer done with his conscience?"

Upon this passage I shall remark, 1. That the list of charges drawn up against me by the preachers were not "every one of them taken from my own books." Their own mode of proceeding proves the contrary, because they called the list, charges which I had brought against them, and charges which they had brought against me. The former could only be taken from my books. 2. Many of the charges that are connected with my books, are
made

made so by their inferences. For instance, they said, "He charges the preachers with want of abilities for the work they have undertaken." There is not a passage in all my pamphlets that will justly admit of such an inference. Now, I appeal to the good sense of my readers, if it were possible for me to find out such a charge from what I have written, had every passage that has the most distant reference to it been marked? 3. Mr. *Adam Clark*, the member of the conference they allude to, pleaded with the preachers for me to have an exact copy of the charges, as drawn up by the preachers in the committee, with time to make my defence. When he found they were determined to withhold it, he took me aside privately, and professed his love and tenderness to me, declaring, if I would give him a promise not to inform of what he should do (or words to that effect) he would mark all the places in the pamphlets that the charges allude to. I gave him my promise, and he fulfilled his engagement. Now, supposing these marked books had been of any particular service to me, have Messrs. *Matber* and *Pawson* a right to claim this as an act of theirs?—And is it not strange that Mr. *Clark*, who appeared melted into tenderness, and who seemed to oppose the conference in this, should relate the story, and admit of their publishing it as an act of the preachers, uniting to shew me kindness? 4. But the list of charges, which the conference knows I fought the most, was that which was drawn up, after I had been tried part of three days.—This is expressed in the letters I sent to them, published in my account of the trial. It was impossible for me to recollect what had passed in the debates for three days. As they would neither allow me to be present in person, nor have a friend to plead my cause; I thought it highly reasonable to request a copy of the charges, that I might properly examine them, and make all the concessions in my power, at the time I should be called to hear their ultimatum. But this request they denied, and every application I made for the list, till it was publicly sold at the book room. "In the name of all that is sacred, what have these wonderful defenders of the rights and privileges of the conference, done with their consciences?"

Another

Another passage in the same page, demands our attention:—"With what supreme contempt has Mr. K— treated several of those venerable men, who were labouring in the vineyard of the Lord before he was born? How inexcusable must he be, even supposing all he deridingly says of them were true. But how much more so, when it is known to be utterly false. To instance only in one particular; he says, 'That at the Manchester conference the bishop's-plan (as he is pleased to call it) was brought forward three times, under three different forms. Now, we solemnly declare, that the bishop's-plan was never so much as mentioned at that conference, much less was it ever brought forward under any form at all. Bishops (as every one then present can witness) were quite out of the question.'"

This passage is so positive, that one would suppose nothing could be said to shake it in any respect. A few remarks will place the subject in a proper light: 1. When the bishop-plan, *hatched* in a private convention at Litchfield, was known, it was execrated by most of the preachers, and by the people in general. This prevented the preachers that attended the Litchfield convention, from bringing it forward at the time of the Bristol conference. 2. It is well known, however, that the idea was not given up. Many preachers not only spoke favourably of it, but seemed determined to have it established if possible. But the leading preachers were assured, if they brought it forward under the name of a bishop-plan, it would be hissed out of the conference at once. 3. When a proposal was made for a few men to be chosen for a building committee, one of the preachers immediately declared, that that proposal implied a great deal. It was the bishop-plan in a new form. And many of the brethren attacked it under that idea. When the subject was introduced afterwards by Mr. *Bradburn*, in another form, it was immediately called the bishop-plan, and opposed under that name. Even in the last effort, for an executive head, it was attacked under the very name of the bishop-plan. Many of the preachers that have seen this pamphlet, are grieved beyond expression, to find two old preachers denying what caused so much altercation at the time alluded to. I appeal to the preachers that attended that conference, whether or not the bishop-plan was

was introduced, in the way that I have mentioned? The people at whose houses many of us lodged, can bear witness, that they frequently heard us mention the disputes that were going forward on the bishop-plan. Because it was not brought forward in the very name of a bishop-plan, will Messrs. *Mather* and *Parson* venture to declare, that it was not brought forward in the manner I have related? So far from what I have published on this head being false, I can call heaven and earth to witness, as well as the preachers that attended in Manchester, that I have spoken the truth on this head, and nothing but the truth. I have placed those attempts in a ridiculous light, to make the bishop-plan execrable among us for ever. If I am able to judge on the subject, I have not poured "supreme contempt" on the heads of any "venerable men, who were labouring in the vineyard of the Lord before I was born." I leave every person to judge how far they had a right to publish, "We solemnly declare, the bishop-plan was never mentioned in the conference, much less was it ever brought forward, under any form at all." Let us again reflect on their own words, "In the name of all that is sacred, what have these wonderful supporters of the rights and privileges of the preachers done with their consciences?"

Another passage in the same page requires our serious attention: "It may be said, without any breach of charity, that all he has hitherto written, has a direct tendency to divert the people from every thing serious, spiritual, and heavenly, and to lead them to laugh and trifle as he himself does; to judge, condemn, and despise their teachers, ; yea, their spiritual fathers; and, in short, to strip them entirely of every shred of religion. To be convinced of this, we need only look at the people where his books are admired. There we see the fruitful field turned into a wilderness. There we shall find confusion, dissention, division, strife and debate, and every man's sword against his fellow!" These are most dreadful consequences.

Let us make a few remarks upon this passage. 1. No people under heaven are more ready to help and assist their ministers, than the Methodists are to help their preachers. 2. For many years they have placed nearly an implicit confidence in the preachers—they have given
liberally

liberally to all the collections, not doubting but their money was properly applied. 3. After seeing their charity abused repeatedly, and they kept ignorant of it, I first helped in publishing Trueman and Freeman's Letters, and after near three years had elapsed, and things grew worse and worse, I published the Progress of Liberty, on purpose to let our friends know how our affairs are conducted. 4. Leaders, stewards, trustees, local preachers, and many respectable friends can bear witness, that I have published nothing but the truth in the complaints I have made of the waste of public money, &c. 5. In many places the people begun to examine these matters, and found them strictly true. This led them to determine, to help in redressing grievances. 6. Many of the preachers were alarmed. They saw, if the people begun to inquire, they would come forward to claim a share in the management of our affairs, and by this means, the conference would lose its undue power and influence. 7. Instead of attempting to answer what I have published, an *hue-and-cry* was raised against me. 8. Several pieces were published by the friends, complaining of the evils I had related, and calling for a speedy redress. 9. Messrs. *Benson, Mather* and *Parson*, attempted to answer the Newcastle address, but their pieces were so weak, that no good end was obtained by them. The answers which were given to them, sufficiently proved, that the Newcastle address stood unshaken by their assaults. 10. The trials I had in the district meeting were only preludes of my expulsion. When I published an account of them in May, the people foresaw what was likely to happen. It appeared to them extremely unreasonable for the preachers to refuse to answer my charges, when many of them declared they were lies. By the opposition raised on the part of the preachers, the people were stirred up to examine matters for themselves. The more they examined, the more they were convinced that a radical reform was wanting among us as a people. 11. Messrs. *Mather* and *Parson*, in their reply to the Newcastle address, (and very many of the preachers have pursued the same plan) warned the people against "reasoning upon these subjects, lest they should fall into the spirit of it." 12. When the preachers expelled me in the manner I have related in my trial, and the people in many large towns considered their conduct as exceedingly

exceedingly unjust, instead of ceasing to inquire, they have been more zealous in this work than ever. 13. Have my pamphlets "a direct tendency to divert the people from every thing serious, spiritual, and heavenly, and to make them laugh and trifle," or the conduct of the conference, in refusing to redress existing grievances, expelling me, and publishing such a lame account of the trial, such oppressive and tyrannical laws, and such an incorrect account of many matters? Is this "Affectionate Address" calculated to make the people "serious, spiritual, and heavenly," or to make them "laugh and trifle?" Because I smiled at the popish measures pursued in my trial, and at the pitiful shifts that were used to bring me in guilty, is this a proof that I am always laughing and trifling? 14. Do the pamphlets I have published lead persons "to judge, condemn, and despise their teachers, yea, their spiritual fathers: and, in short, to strip them entirely of every shred of religion;" or do the steps the preachers themselves have taken lead to such a dreadful end? Is it not the conduct of the conference, in refusing to give the people the privileges which belong to them in Christ Jesus, and making such new laws as are a reproach to any sect or party of christians under heaven? 15. Is it a truth, that the people that have read my books, who were once like a fruitful field, are now like a barren wilderness? Are they the cause of "confusion, dissention, division, strife, and debate," or the violent measures of a few of the preachers, who determine to hold fast undue power and influence, and to prevent the people from enjoying the privileges which belong to them in Christ Jesus? While they deny that an oppressive system exists, and endeavour to stir up the minds of the people to shut their eyes against the light, and to prevent them from examining their own affairs, can the friends that see and feel our evils be satisfied? Are not the persons in the societies who countenance their measures, generally kept ignorant of the nature of our present disputes, and taught to believe the cause of God is at stake, when nothing more is at stake, than the oppressive laws and rules of the connexion, made without the knowledge and consent of the people? If every man's sword is against his brother, who is the cause? Jesus Christ came not to send peace where it would have been rejected, but a sword? The truth

truth is the sword of the Spirit, and will always destroy corruption and every thing that belongs to priest-craft, as sure as it is allowed to prevail. If once our people would candidly examine matters, they would no longer have their understandings darkened, nor their passions wrought upon, to plead against their own interests, in support of a number of things contrary to the gospel of Christ. Was it "without a breach of charity" to publish, that my pamphlets have had such fatal consequences, when it is their own *violent opposition* that causes the evils complained of? Could they declare, "without a breach of charity," that my writings tend to strip those that read them of every shred of religion, and turn the fruitful field to a barren wilderness? Can they "without a breach of charity" declare, that where my pamphlets are read, they are the *real* cause of "confusion, dissention, division, strife and debate, and set every man's sword against his fellow? What sort of charity is it that leads to such conclusions? Is it the charity of Jesus Christ and his apostles, or the charity of Rome? Have we not a right to pray from our heart, "From such charity, good Lord, deliver us?"

Another passage in the same page, runs thus, "There are many other things in his pamphlets equally false, and might with equal ease be confuted. Let any candid christian seriously consider the pernicious tendency of his wretched tracts, and then let them say, whether the preachers could, with a good conscience, suffer a man so dangerous to the peace and well-being of society, to remain among them."

From this passage I shall just remark, 1. They have not proved one false assertion that I have published, in all their efforts. 2. I call upon them to name "the many other things equally false," and attempt to confute them. If they are only equally false with those I have considered, they are not false at all. 3. Have my "wretched tracts a pernicious tendency," or are they calculated to remove the grievances we so justly complain of? 4. Am I a "dangerous person to the peace and well-being of society," or a person that is seeking the happiness of all men, especially of the preachers and people in the Methodist connexion? 5. Was it possible for the preachers to let me remain with them, "with a good conscience,"

or was it a duty they owed to God and their own consciences to expel me?

I shall finish my remarks on what immediately concerns myself in their pamphlet, by quoting a passage from the minutes of a district meeting, held in Bristol, October 18, 19, 1796. They ask, "What is the result of our examination of several printed letters which have come before us, especially the wretched composition from Salford, [they should have said Manchester] signed JOHN SHORE, *Chairman*?" *Ans.* 1. We advise all our friends to send their's, and all such letters back, to their troublesome authors, and let them die away. 2. We highly approve of the "Affectionate Address," just published by Messrs. *Mather* and *Parson*, on our affairs; and do most cordially and unanimously return them our thanks for it, and for their unwearied diligence to serve the connexion for many years. We unanimously agree in confirming the sentence of the last conference, in the CONDEMNATION and EXPULSION of *Alexander Kilham*. May God Almighty preserve us all in the simplicity of the gospel, and crown our labours with abundant success, that we may live and die agreeably to the designs of our ever-blessed God, in first raising up the Methodist preachers."

Upon this passage I would ask, 1. Did the last conference condemn and expel *Alexander Kilham* conditionally, and leave the confirmation of this business to be ratified by Messrs. *Joseph Bradford*, *S. Bradburn*, *J. Pritchard*, *J. Rogers*, *W. Ashman*, *C. Atmore*, *J. Byron*, *W. Jenkins*, *A. Davies*, *J. Burges*, *J. Jay*, *J. Kelk*, *R. Gower*, *J. Robbins*, and *A. Mayor*, at a district meeting which they held in Bristol, on the 18th and 19th of October? If the conference referred this business to these fifteen brethren, ought they not to have told me that this was the case, in order that suitable steps might have been taken before the sentence had been confirmed? 2. Ought not these brethren to have prayed immediately after the confirmation of my sentence, "May God Almighty give us the simplicity of the gospel," and then they might have added, as christian ministers, "preserve us all in simplicity, [or the love of power and undue influence will corrupt us,] and crown our labours with abundant success, that we may live and die according to the designs

signs of our ever blessed God, in first raising up the Methodist preachers." 3. Was the Manchester address "a wretched composition," deserving the censure of the Bristol district meeting, or did it deserve their grateful acknowledgments for the noble spirit breathed in it? Will the advice of the Bristol district committee cause it, and others of a similar nature "to die away," or will it raise them to life in the Methodist Monitor, and in other publications? 4. Does Messrs. *Mather* and *Pawson's* "Affectionate Address," demand the "approbation and cordial unanimous thanks" of the Bristol district meeting, or ought they to have pointed out the evils that are found in it, and warned our people not to drink in the deadly poison contained in some parts of it? If this "Affectionate Address" deserves the praise of a district meeting, will it not be censured and condemned by the greatest part of our sensible friends? What will be the consequence of pursuing such steps in future, should they be continued? May the eternal God cause simplicity and godly sincerity to return to us, that we may glorify his name, by walking worthy of the gospel to the end of our days!

Without stopping to make any remarks on the lawsuit at present, I shall call the reader's attention to other parts of the pamphlet equally interesting.

By specifying the particular sums, which have been paid from the preachers' fund to help to support the work, they have made the whole 8267l. 10s. 10d. After stating the particulars of the monies making this aggregate sum, they remark, "But Mr. K—— says, That he has heard several of the preachers say, that they are determined to have all the above described money out of the book-room. It is not at all unlikely that he may (upon occasion) have heard some of the preachers talk as extravagantly as himself. But did Mr. K—— never either hear, or think of the old adage, "*Where it is not to be had, even the king loses his right?*" And how either Mr. K——, or the preachers (that he says he has heard talk so) will be able to get the money out of the book-room, we will not pretend to say." I hope Messrs. *Mather* and *Pawson* have not forgotten, that it was determined in the last conference, that the whole sum should be paid with legal interest: and that this stands register-

ed in their minutes. It is very curious, in the minutes they have published, if all the monies were paid in belonging to the fund, they should have about 6000*l*. But now, that a detailed account is given, the fund stands at 3267*l*. 10*s*. 10*d*. Did they not know that it stood so high, or were they determined to keep some of it out of sight, lest our people should refuse to help in future, when they heard them positively declare, "All the monies borrowed from that fund shall be paid with legal interest?" These brethren seem to think it strange, that any preacher should talk so extravagantly; and yet, they have published a similar declaration in their own minutes! If the conference considered the old adage *Where there is nothing to be had, even the king loses his right*, and know that neither the yearly collection, nor the book-room, could ever advance the money belonging to the preachers' fund, why have they so positively declared, they will have the whole repaid with legal interest.

The following passage is very interesting:—"It is well known that good Mr. *Wesley* delighted much to trust entirely in God, and to live by faith. He therefore did not wish that the preachers should have much in hand; and as our expences increased very much every year, by reason of the preachers marrying, and the children with which it pleased God to bless them;—hence from the year 1781, in order to ease the people, he insisted upon it, that a part of the money collected for the preachers' fund, should go towards supporting the preachers' wives, &c. so that the circuits might not be burthened, nor the work of God hindered. Our affection for our aged father, and our love for the cause of God, obliged us to submit to this, only keeping an account of what he had as under, and accordingly, from that year we paid for the above purposes the following sums," &c. Upon this passage let us remark, 1. Mr. *Wesley* was conscious that thousands of respectable ministers, who once ran well, have been corrupted from the simplicity of Christ by riches. And he very well knew, that persons taken from a low station in life, are more liable to be corrupted, than others differently situated. 2. When he beheld the liberality of the friends, in their giving more than was necessary to supply the wants of superannuated preachers, and their widows, he thought it highly expedient to take the surplus of their charity to the preachers' fund, and apply it to help

help in defraying the expences of the yearly contingencies, as the collection for that purpose was not sufficient. 3. When all the collections were sufficient to defray the expenditure, he delighted, not only in applying every shilling of it to help forward the work, but “to trust entirely in God, and live by faith,” as it respected future supplies. He did this “that the circuits might not be burthened, nor the work of God hindered.” 4. He no more expected, that *his sons in the gospel* would demand all the money to be refunded that he had taken from that collection, than he supposed they would take his bones from the grave, and burn them in contempt to his character. 5. It appears that several of his sons in the gospel, do not “delight much to trust entirely in God, and to live by faith,” as it respects the preachers’ fund. This favours too much of primitive christianity. They had rather recover what their good father applied to help forward the work, and thus prevent the design of his kindness to the circuits at large, than depend too much upon the Lord. 6. There is something curious in wording this passage: They say, he “*insisted* upon it that a part of the money collected for the preachers’ fund, should go towards supporting the preachers’ wives,” &c. and add, “Our affection for our aged father, and love for the cause of God obliged us to submit.”—“Good Mr. *Wesley* insisted,” and his good sons “were *obliged* to submit.” How far love to him and the cause, influenced them to give way to his will is hard to determine. Facts speak louder than words. Their resolving to have the money back since his death, would lead us to suppose, that neither love to him, nor the cause obliged them to submit, but his *insisting* on it, *compelled* them to give place to his will.

Another passage upon this fund ought not to be overlooked:—“As to the rules of the preachers’ fund, we have nothing to say about them. They are, for any thing we can see, as equitable and as just as can be devised at present.” Is it *equitable* and *just* for superannuated preachers or their widows to receive pounds a year for life, according to the years of travelling, whether they want them or not? Is it equitable and just for a rich superannuated preacher to claim thirty or forty pounds a year for life, and a young preacher that is superannuated by the providence of God, who has no-

thing of his own, only to have a third, or half of that sum? Is it equitable and just that a young widow should have thirty or forty pounds for life, because she has been the wife of a travelling preacher for a week, a month, or a year; and for this same young widow to be allowed half pay, should she marry again; and whole pay, if she should lose her second husband? Other things, equally ridiculous are found in the rules. They had no existence while Mr. *Wesley* lived. The real wants of preachers and widows were the rule of disbursement. If a few old preachers "cannot devise a more equitable and just plan," cannot the rest of the brethren, who are not so deeply interested in them? And if all the preachers cannot devise more equitable and just rules, is it impossible for our people to devise better? Only let the rules of disbursement which existed at the death of Mr. *Wesley* be established, and we shall see the people every where rejoicing on that account.

It was the *glaring absurdity* of these rules that led me first to examine other parts of our economy. And it was their continuance, after so many remonstrances against them, that led me to speak so strongly against them, in the *Progress of Liberty*. Many of the brethren have viewed them in the same light, and have endeavoured to remove them. Their continuance, in defiance of the people, is a great proof to many, that a few preachers at the helm of affairs, most of whom have travelled above thirty years, have power to act as they please in these matters. Because the good sense of a number of the younger preachers abhor many of the rules as much as I do.

Let us advert next to the disbursement of the yearly collection, &c. Two or three preachers take down the particulars of the expenditures, as they are given in by the preachers. This, I apprehend, is done to prevent mistakes. One would suppose no person would attempt to publish any thing from his own papers, without first comparing them with the papers of his brethren. It appears, however, that Mr. *Bradburn* published the account from his own papers, and the other brethren's that kept he accounts, Mr. *Benson* excepted. The account was amazingly erroneous. In a great number of places the people loudly complained. In others, the preachers declared, they had not received the sums specified. Many
severe

severe reflections were made on this head, in a vast number of circuits. The preachers were ashamed, and the people exceedingly grieved. The preachers in office soon heard of the complaints of the people. It appears, Mr. *Benson* sent his papers to London. Messrs. *Mather* and *Parson* revised them. They have published a new account of the expenditure. But unfortunately, it differs, so particularly in a vast number of instances from the other, that we cannot tell which is the most worthy of our acceptance. As this was published *designedly* to accommodate matters, it ought to have been calculated to give satisfaction. The column for law is entirely left out of this new arrangement. We have no account of the mothers of two preachers. Other things are equally erroneous. When one of our friends was told this new arrangement would give satisfaction, he observed, "As your two accounts differ so very materially, I cannot conceive that an unprejudiced mind can be satisfied with either. You may publish a third or a fourth account, which may differ from these, as much as they differ from each other. As your accommodating account has failed, which was published on purpose to quiet our minds, we have no hopes now of being satisfied for this year on this head."

Let us examine their note on this subject:—"Perhaps it will be said, As you are so apt to make mistakes, this shews the necessity of delegates attending the conference in order to assist you. Truly, we want no assistance. We have by far too many attend the conference already. We could do our business much better, and much sooner, were fewer persons present."

Is it not a little singular, that these worthy fathers should rather peevishly declare, "they want no assistance," when they have made two attempts to publish right accounts of our expenditure, and both are materially wrong? There never were minutes published from a conference, that shewed the want of help from delegates so much as these do. We generally suppose, when a man makes several attempts to accomplish any work, and fails in them all, he has need of help. Should we tell him so, and he angrily reply, "I have no need of your assistance," we should pity him, and have many reflections upon his supposed self-sufficiency. But should the work be
ours,

ours, and he continue to fail in his attempts to accomplish it, we should either insist on his giving it up, or of his allowing us to appoint others to help him. There is something very curious, in these worthy fathers declaring, they could do their work much sooner, and much better if fewer persons attended. Ought not this consideration alone lead them to adopt a better plan? If the circuits are neglected, while a number of preachers attend the conference, only to hinder and perplex the work, ought not a plan to be established, to prevent any from going, but those that have a right to attend? Some have supposed that this expression implies more than is expressed. And that if Messrs. *Mather* and *Pawson* would have spoken out, they would have declared, if seven or ten of us are only allowed to meet together, we can manage the affairs of the whole connection, abundantly better than they are managed now.

(To be concluded in the next number.)

Reflections and Helps for promoting Religious Conversation.

(Continued from Page 72.)

Sixth Conversation.—Hunger and thirst after Righteousness.

Quest. IS it your real desire and daily endeavour to grow in grace.

You may know this, 1. By your not looking back on any past good works to stop or rest in them. 2. By your jealousy over every thing that looks like decay. 3. By your actual desire of grace in the use of all religious ordinances. 4. By your diligence in the use of all such means. 5. By the desire you find in you of the most searching and quickening preaching and conversation. 6. By the sorrow it gives you, that you have not better improved your opportunities and time.

Seventh Conversation.—Mortification of sin.

Quest. Is the law of sin in your members not only in a state of (a) subjection, but (b) losing its power and influence day by day.

(a) You

(a) You may know whether corrupt nature be in subjection, 1. By the purpose of your heart to God's will in opposition to fear and shame, interest and ease, which the will of the flesh would have consulted and considered.— 2. By your acting in your general course upon the plan of obedience to God, while your corrupt nature is soliciting for a quite contrary course. — 3. By your hatred of in-dwelling sin, and regarding it as the heaviest of all your burthens. 4. By your jealousy over, and watchfulness against your own deceitful heart, lest it should get advantage of you. 5. By your godly shame, sorrow and self-displeasure when corrupt nature has gained an advantage in any instance, stirring you up to oppose and deny it with immediate purpose of heart, and greater diligence. 6. By your not declining self-denying duties, though your flesh pleads for being spared.

(b) You may know if corrupt nature be losing ground, 1. By the greater steadfastness of your purposes for God and duty. 2. By the greater readiness and ease wherewith you put them into practice. 3. By the greater calmness and resolvedness of mind wherewith you reject the solicitations of the flesh. 4. By the less influence your corruptions have over you, and the less power they have to make you apprehensive for them. 5. By the greater command you have of yourself to think and act with freedom and without bias.

Eighth Conversation.—Fear and watchfulness.

Quest. Do you maintain that holy fear of offending God, which keeps you duly on your guard against falling into sin?

You may know how far you do this, 1. By your care to keep yourself out of all needless temptations. 2. By the restraint of your mind in certain company, where your integrity may be in danger. 3. By the diligence you use to preserve the spirituality of your temper against that enmity of mind which is natural to you. 4. By your carefulness not to fall into lightness in conversation. 5. By the abiding jealousy you have over the whole body of sin, and especially that member of it which has most power with you. 6. By the abiding reverence you have
upon

upon your mind of God's majesty and continual presence.

Ninth Conversation.—Living to the Glory of God.

Quest. Have you such a tender concern for God's glory, as engages your attention to it beyond all other considerations?

You may know how far this is your case, 1. By the desire you have that the tempers and dispositions of your heart might be in a more practical conformity to God's majesty and perfections, in faith, fear, love, trust, and submission. 2. By your endeavour that your whole conduct may be not only inoffensive, but also calculated to promote faith in God, and submission to him, in all who are witnesses of your conversation. 3. By your setting a value on your learning, knowledge, wealth, and influence, principally because God may be glorified by them. 4. By your sorrow for any part of your conduct which has brought disgrace on God's name, and by your readiness to remove that disgrace by any means, however disagreeable to your pride, or seemingly prejudicial to your character. 5. By your special regard to God's glory in your particular calling, serving him therein with that willingness, simplicity, diligence and honesty, which shall testify your resignation to his will appointing you thereto, and most effectually promote his honour by you.

Tenth Conversation.—Honesty.

Quest. In all your dealings, do you that unto all men which you would they should do unto you?

You may judge of yourself herein, 1. By your abhorrence, and rejection in your practice, of that worldly and most dishonest maxim, "Buy as cheap, and sell as dear as you can." 2. By your not lessening the worth of what you would buy, nor over-rating the worth of that you would sell. 3. By your taking no advantage of the necessities or ignorance of any you deal with. 4. By your being as ready to pay as to receive money. 5. By your honest endeavour to pay what you owe. 6. By your not borrowing what you have no fair prospect of repaying. 7. By your not being an eye-servant, who

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works only when he is looked upon. 8. By your making conscience of using your time and ability to the benefit of those who have paid you for them, being as ready to do your work as you are willing to be paid your wages. 9. By your restoring what you have fraudulently taken, or what you are sensible is not in any other way your own. 10. By your making conscience of not defrauding the king of his tribute and customs.

Eleventh Conversation.—Thankfulness.

Quest. Do you maintain a thankful temper of heart for God's mercies towards you,—(a) spiritual and (b) temporal.

(a) Regarding spiritual mercies: If you are not really sensible of your want of all righteousness, strength, and wisdom, in yourself, you cannot have any real thankfulness for spiritual mercies; but if you thus know yourself, and find by experience that in all respects you are complete in Christ, you are in the right way of maintaining that cheerful and thankful frame of heart, which becomes and recommends the gospel. Wherefore, I. Respecting righteousness: Are you thankful, 1. That you are not in despair of mercy. 2. That you have hope thereof. 3. That you enjoy peace of mind notwithstanding your manifold sins. 4. That you have confidence towards God as *your* God. II. Respecting strength: Are you thankful, 1. For good motions? 2. For good purposes. 3. For grace enabling you to duty, though none with much imperfection. 4. For grace following you, when you have fallen. III. Respecting wisdom: Are you thankful, 1. For your knowledge of the gospel? 2. For any abiding place it has in your mind. 3. For any of its promises, threatenings, or directions brought home to you in time of need. 4. For your steadfastness in believing the gospel, so as that you are not unsettled and disordered by the different opinions of others, or by the falling away of any who have long made open profession.—And regarding spiritual mercies in general: You may know how far you are thankful for them, 1. By your looking on them as marks of God's good-will toward you. 2. By their preserving you in quiet, cheerful temper of heart, in whatever circumstances

stances. 3. By your readiness to own them to the glory of God. 4. By the influences they have to promote in you a grateful and a child-like obedience.

(b) Regarding temporal mercies; You cannot be duly thankful for them, unless you are sensible you have forfeited all right to them by sin. And you may know how far you are so, 1. By the frequency and fervency of your thanksgivings for life, and all the blessings you enjoy, which make life comfortable to yourself, or render you useful to others. 2. By the frequency and fervency of your thanksgivings for those providences, which keep or deliver you from danger, which prevent you from falling into sin; which bring you in the way of the means of grace, which are suited to quicken and forward you in faith and holiness.

Note, The illustrations, added to each of the foregoing subjects, are designed to help inexperience, to undeceive the presuming, and to satisfy the doubting. In the use of them, all should be cautioned against being forward and assuming on the one hand, in thinking and speaking of themselves more highly than they ought, which will effectually hinder all farther improvement: and on the other hand, against being too much dejected, if they find they do not come up to some of them. We must ground ourselves wholly on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, be thankful for the measure of grace which is given us, be careful to improve it, and in all faithfulness and love to our Redeemer, press on to higher degrees of perfection.

* * * The Remarks on Messrs. *Mather* and *Pawson*'s Address filling so many pages in this number, has prevented other articles from appearing, which will be printed in some future number.

No. IV.

THE

Methodist Monitor.

MR. PAWSON wishes me to take for a Motto the 10th Verse of the 20th Chapter of Jeremiah, modified by him. But I prefer the following excellent Passage from his own Pamphlet :—

“ Remember, O ye Methodists ! that the Reign of
“ Popery is past and gone ; let it never be restored
“ among you under any Shape or Name. In the
“ Name of him who bought you with his Blood,
“ maintain the Rights and Liberties of your own
“ Consciences !”

Robinson's Preface to the third Volume of Saurin's Sermons.

(Continued from Page 81.)

WHAT can a declaimer mean, when he repeats a number of propositions, and declares the belief of them all essential to the salvation of man ? or what could he reply to one, who should ask him, Which man do you mean, the man in the stall ? It is Sir Isaac Newton : or the man in the aile ? It is Tom Long, the carrier. Good Almighty, the Creator of both, has formed these two men with different organs of body, and different faculties of mind ; he has given them different advantages and different opportunities of improving them, and has placed them in different relations, and empowered

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the one to teach, what the other, depend on his belief what will, is not capable of learning. Ten thousand Tom Longs go to make up one Newtonian soul. Is it credible, the God who made these two men, who thoroughly knows them, who is the common Parent, the just Governor, and the kind Benefactor of both, should require of men so different, equal belief and practice? Were such a thing supposable, how unequal and disproportional, how inadequate and unlike himself must such a Deity be! To grasp the terraqueous globe with a human hand, to make a tulip-cup contain the ocean, to gather all the light of the universe into one human eye, to hide the sun in a snuff-box, are the mighty projects of children's fancies. Is it possible, requisitions similar to these should proceed from the only wise God?

There is, we have reason to believe, a certain portion of spirit, if I may be allowed to speak so, that constitutes a human soul; there are infinitely different degrees of capability imparted by the Creator to the souls of mankind; and there is a certain ratio, by necessity of nature, between each degree of intelligence and a given number of ideas, as there is between a cup capable of containing a given quantity, and a quantity of matter capable of being contained in it. In certain cases it might serve my interest could the palm of my hand contain a hoghead; but in general my interest is better served by an inability to contain so much. We apply these certain principles to revelation, and we say, God hath given in the christian religion an infinite multitude of ideas; as in nature he hath created an infinite multitude of objects. These objects are diversified without end, they are of various sizes, colours, and shapes, and they are capable of innumerable motions, productive of multifarious effects, and all placed in various degrees of perspicuity; objects of thought, in the christian religion, are exactly similar; there is no end of their variety; God and all his perfections, man and all his operations, the being and employment of superior holy spirits, the existence and dispositions of fallen spirits, the creation and government of the whole world of matter, and that of spirit, the influence of God, and the obligations of men, the dissolution of the universe, a resurrection, a judgment, a heaven, and a hell all these, placed in various degrees of perspicuity, are exhibited

hibited in religion to the contemplation of intelligent creatures. The creatures, who are required to contemplate these objects, have various degrees of contemplative ability, and their duty, and consequently their virtue, which is nothing else but a performance of duty, consists in applying all their ability to understand as many of these objects, that is, to form as many ideas of them, as are apportioned to their own degree. So many objects they are capable of seeing, so many objects it is their duty to see. So much of each object they are capable of comprehending, so much of each object it is their duty to comprehend. So many emotions they are capable of exercising, so many emotions it is their duty to exercise. So many acts of devotion they can perform, so many Almighty God will reward them for performing, or punish them for neglecting. This I call the doctrine of religious proportion. This I have a right to expect to find in a divine revelation, and this I find in the most splendid manner in christianity, as it lies in the Bible, as it was in the first churches, and as it is in some modern communities. I wish I could exchange the word *some* for *all*.

This doctrine of proportion would unroot every human creed in the world, at least, it would annihilate the imposition of any. Instead of making one creed for a whole nation, which, by the way, provides for only one nation, and consigns over the rest of the world to the destroyer of mankind; instead of doing so, there should be as many creeds as creatures; and instead of affirming, the belief of three hundred propositions is essential to the felicity of every man in both worlds, we ought to affirm, the belief of half a proposition is essential to the salvation of Mary, and the belief of a whole one to that of John, the belief of six propositions, or, more properly, the examination of six propositions, is essential to the salvation of the reverend Edward, and the examination of sixty to that of the right reverend Richard; for, if I can prove, one has sixty degreee of capacity, another six, and another one, I can easily prove, it would be unjust to require the same exercises of all; and a champion ascribing such injustice to God would be no formidable adversary for the pompousness of his challenge, or the comparisons of his horse:

his very sword could not conquer, though it might affright from the field.

The world and revelation, both the work of the same God, are both constructed on the same principles; and were the book of scripture like that of nature laid open to universal inspection, were all ideas of temporal rewards and punishments removed from the study of it, that would come to pass in the moral world, which has actually happened in the world of human science, each capacity would find its own object, and take its own quantum. Newtons will find stars without penalties, Miltons will be poets, and Lardners christians without rewards. Calvins will contemplate the decrees of God, and Baxters will try to assort them with the spontaneous volitions of men; all like the celestial bodies, will roll on in their quiet majesty of simple proportion, each in its proper sphere shining to the glory of God the Creator. But alas! *We have not so learned Christ!*

Were this doctrine of proportion allowed, three consequences would follow: First, Subscription to human creeds, with all their appendages, both penal and pompous, would roll back into the turbulent ocean, the *See I* mean, from whence they came; the bible would remain a placid emanation of wisdom from God; and the belief of it a sufficient test of the obedience of his people. Secondly, Christians would be freed from the inhuman necessity of execrating one another, and, by placing christianity in believing in Christ, and not in believing in one another, they would rid revelation of those intolerable abuses, which are fountains of sorrow to christians, and sources of arguments to infidels. Thirdly, Opportunity would be given to believers in Christ to exercise those dispositions, which the present disproportional division of this common benefit obliges them to suppress, or conceal. O cruel theology, that makes it a crime to do what I have neither a right nor a power to leave undone!

I call *perfection* a third necessary character of a divine revelation. Every production of an intelligent being bears the characters of the intelligence, that produced it, *for as the man is, so is his strength*, Judges viii. 21. A weak genius produces a work imperfect and weak like itself. A wise, a good being produces a work wise and good,

good, and, if his power be equal to his wisdom and goodness, his work will resemble himself, and such a degree of wisdom, animated by an equal degree of goodness, and assisted by an equal degree of power, will produce a work equally wise—equally beneficial—equally effectual. The same degrees of goodness and power accompanied with only half the degree of wisdom, will produce a work as remarkable for a deficiency of skill as for a redundancy of efficiency and benevolence. Thus the flexibility of the hand may be known by the writing; the power of penetrating, and combining in the mind of the physician, may be known by the feelings of the patient, who has taken his prescription; and, by parity of reason, the uniform perfections of an invisible God may be known by the uniform perfection of his productions.

I perceive, I must not launch into this wide ocean of the doctrine of perfection, and I will confine myself to three characters of imperfection, which may serve to explain my meaning. Proposing to obtain a great end without the use of proper means—the employing of great means to obtain no valuable end—and the destroying of the end by the use of the means employed to obtain it; are three characters of imperfection rarely found in frail intelligent agents: and certainly they can never be attributed to the great Supreme. A violation of the doctrine of analogy would argue God an unjust being; a violation of that of proportion would prove him an unkind being; and a violation of this of perfection would argue him a being void of wisdom. Were we to suppose him capable of proposing plans impossible to be executed, and then punishing his creatures for not executing them, we should attribute to the best of beings the most odious dispositions of the most infamous of mankind. Heaven forbid the thought!

The first character of imperfection is—*proposing to obtain a great end without the use of proper means*. To propose a noble end argues a fund of goodness: but not to propose proper means to obtain it argues a defect of wisdom. Christianity proposes the noble end of assimilating man to God! and it employs proper means of obtaining this end. God is an intelligent being, happy in a perfection of wisdom; the gospel assimilates the felicity

of human intelligences to that of the Deity by communicating the ideas of God on certain articles to men. God is a bountiful being, happy in a perfection of goodness; the gospel assimilates the felicity of man to that of God, by communicating certain benevolent dispositions to its disciples similar to the communicative excellencies of God. God is an operative being, happy in the display of exterior works beneficent to his creatures; the gospel felicitates man, by directing and enabling him to perform certain works beneficent to his fellow-creatures. God condescends to propose this noble end, of assimilating man to himself, to the nature of mankind, and not to certain distinctions foreign from the nature of man, and appendent on exterior circumstances. The boy, who feeds the farmer's meanest animals; the sailor, who spends his days on the ocean; the miner, who, secluded from the light of the day, and the society of his fellow-creatures, spends his life in a subterraneous cavern, as well as the renowned heroes of mankind, are all included in this condescending benevolent design of God. The gospel proposes to assimilate all to God; but it proposes such an assimilation, or, may I say? such a degree of moral excellence, as the nature of each can bear, and it directs to means so proper to obtain this end, and renders these directions so extremely plain, that the perfection of the designer shines with the utmost glory.

I have sometimes imagined a Pagan ship's crew in a vessel under sail in the wide ocean; I have supposed not one soul aboard ever to have heard one word of christianity; I have imagined a bird dropping a New Testament written in the language of the mariners on the upper deck; I have imagined a fund of uneducated, unsophisticated good sense in this company, and I have required of this little world answers to two questions; first, What end does this book propose? the answer is, *This book was written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name, John xx. 31.* I ask secondly, What means does this book authorize a foremast man, who believes, to employ to the rest of the crew to induce them to believe, that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing they also with the foremast man, may have eternal felicity through his name? I dare not answer this question:

tion: but I dare venture to guess, should this foremast man conceal the book from any of the crew, he would be unlike the God who gave it to all; or should he oblige the cabin-boy to admit his explication of the book, he would be unlike the God who requires the boy to explain it to himself; and should he require the captain to enforce his explication by penalties, the captain ought to reprove his folly for counteracting the end of the book, the felicity of all the mariners; for turning a message of peace into an engine of faction; for employing means inadequate to the end; and so for erasing that character of perfection, which the heavenly donor gave it.

(To be continued.)

An Abstract of Watts's Rational Foundation of a Christian Church.

(Continued from Page 90.)

The several Advantages of such a Church or Christian Society.

SO natural a scheme of social religion as this does not need long and express forms of institutions, after the great doctrines and duties of the christian faith and life are plainly revealed and received. All that is found in the New Testament relating to christian churches, so happily corresponds with these dictates of the light of nature, and the affairs of the civil life, that it has made these rules much more plain, and easy, and practicable than those of the Jewish religion, or perhaps of any other religion that pretends to divine revelation; this scheme is built on the eternal reasons and relations of things, as well as the word of God. The particular positive prescriptions relating

relating to christian churches are but few, while the general duties of christian fellowship are such as the light of nature and reason seem to dictate to all societies whatsoever. It is the evil mixture of the needless and fanciful inventions of men, together with the plain and common dictates of nature and scripture, and the impositions of these inventions on conscience, which have done so much injury to christianity, defaced its beauty, and tarnished its honours.

This scheme is perfectly consistent with every form and kind of civil government, whether it be a kingdom, a senate, or a republic. As it does not mingle itself with the interests of this world, nor assume to itself any civil or coercive power, so it can make no head against the governors of the country; for its power is of another kind, and reaches but to one single society of christians. Nor are they combined by any law of Christ, in such united multitudes, under one common visible head, as to make themselves dangerous to any state. Whatsoever hath been done in the world by men professing christianity, in a way of resistance to lawful governors, or rebellious against them, hath never been done by them as churches of Christ, formed upon the model I have laid down.

The form of a christian church allows to all its members the most perfect liberty of men and christians. It is inconsistent with persecution for conscience-sake; for it leaves all civil rewards and preferments, penalties and punishments, to kingdoms, and states, and the governors of this world. It pretends to no power over conscience, to compel men to obedience; no prisons, no axes, fire, nor sword. It gives its ministers power and authority to command nothing but what is found in the bible: *All other things must be determined by the consent of the people, who are supposed to be led by common prudence, by the necessary reasons of things, and by a vote of the major part of the society.* But if any of these things, particular persons, after all proper enquiries, cannot agree with the major part, they may make their remonstrances, and be dismissed, if they cannot continue there with tolerable satisfaction; or they may withdraw to another congregation if they are aggrieved, and the society refuse to dismiss them.

I confess, those christians who differ from the major part of the congregation should seriously examine themselves,

selves, whether their disagreement doth not arise from any pique, or prejudice, or worldly interest, or humour, or obstinate self-will; and, in some particulars, they should deny themselves, rather than divide themselves from a society whose communion they have long enjoyed; more especially, they should take heed of this, in the country, where they have not convenience of holding communion with other christian societies. And even where they have such opportunities and conveniences, persons should not indulge a fickle humour, nor run wandering about from place to place, and fluttering from one church to another, upon every little difference. But after all, it must be acknowledged, there may be several just and reasonable grounds for particular christians to separate from a society, from which they differ in some sentiments or transactions, though they still continue to acknowledge them to be a true church of Christ. Such a liberty as this must have all voluntary members, and not to be turned into prisons.

If any person sins so grossly against the plain rules of the gospel, or the laws of God or Christ, as to appear to renounce the characters of a christian, the church hath power only to renounce such a person, and disclaim all christian fellowship with him, and to turn him into the world, which is the kingdom of Satan, till he repent: But they have no authority to hurt his life or limbs; to touch a hair of his head, nor a penny of his money by way of punishment.

By such sort of churches as these, christianity is more easily maintained in single and secret assemblies, if the powers of this world favour them not; for there is no need of large multitudes assembled together for any ordinances of worship, or for discipline; nor need of any such public appearances or transactions, as may give any unnecessary umbrage or suspicion to persecuting enemies: There is no need of councils and synods of ministers of distant cities, to meet together to make laws for the church, or to rectify disorders there: Nor is there any need to travel over large countries or dioceses, to fetch a rightful ordination of a minister for any church; much less to take a journey to Rome, if all the ministers in a nation were dead, or departed from the faith. If the whole society, which was wont to meet together, cannot do it
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under a persecuting prince, for fear of exposing themselves to public injury, they may assemble in smaller parties, and their preachers may teach, and pray, and administer all ordinances among them, as it was often done in the primitive times, maintaining their christian fellowship by secret meetings: And they may all be called little churches in the house. By such single congregations, larger or smaller, was the whole church of Christ in the world continued and encreased, the first two or three hundred years, whensoever the powers of this world took it into their heads to persecute and destroy the professors of the christian faith.

Perhaps it may be objected here, Would it not be a much more substantial and powerful way of maintaining christian churches, if these single congregations, by virtue of their ministers or elders, were combined together in some sacred bond of union, that might make a considerable body of people under such heads or leaders, or under one supreme head, who might better defend them against the invasion of their rites by any secular powers or persecuting princes? To this I answer, That churches of Christ, considered as such, have no secular powers: But when men become christians, or members of churches, they do not divest themselves of any secular or civil rights or powers which they had before: And therefore, when natural or civil liberties are unjustly and cruelly invaded by any of the men of this world, they, by the laws of nature, have a just right, as men, to defend themselves; and no ecclesiastical combinations can give them any further right or power than what they have as men: And this belongs to them still, whatsoever religion they profess, whether natural or revealed, whether pagan, mahometan, or christian. A professor of every religion has a right to be protected by the government, as long as he maintains his allegiance to the governors, and does no injury to the state. But if governors will not protect him, but will give him up to the fury of persecutors, he has certainly a civil right to defend himself and his friends against assaults and injuries.

Miscarriages in the government, or conduct of such a church as I have described, are less dangerous to christianity; because they affect but one single congregation, they reach but to one society. Those ecclesiastical governments

vernments which include vast numbers and multitudes, combined under one or more spiritual heads or rulers, if there be any misrule and confusion brought in among them, it involves multitudes in the mischief of it, and sometimes shakes or destroys whole nations. But if a government which is included within one single congregation be never so much divided by contentions, and fall into the greatest confusions, the mischief is not of so large an extent, nor can have so fatal and dreadful consequences. If the congregation itself should be actually dissolved by these constitutions, the particular members of it may depart and join themselves to other congregations within their reach or neighbourhood, who are nearest to their own opinion, and walk with them in a religious and peaceful fellowship, which they could not well do before, because of such different opinions and divided spirits.

Such single societies or churches, so constituted, are most happily suited to maintain and carry on the great purposes and designs of the gospel, for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of true christians. Of this matter see the learned Dr. Owen's enquiry into the Original of churches, chap. vi. page 119. See also Sermons at Berry-street, serm. 49.

Upon the whole, whensoever it shall appear, that any other form of a christian church is more happily suited to the edification and peace of christians, to the preservation of christian liberty, and to secure the spiritual honours which belong to Christ in his churches, and at the same time appears to have more countenance from the New Testament than this, I shall be glad to relinquish this set of sentiments, and with pleasure exchange it for a better. That is certainly the best form of a christian church, whereby truth, peace, and holiness may be most happily promoted and secured.

The Power of Churches to appoint holy Things and holy Actions.

Question, Whether a christian church may not appoint or determine circumstances and ceremonies of worship and order, which are left undetermined in the New Testament, and require them to be observed?

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In answer to this, We must distinguish between the *religious ceremonies of worship*, and the mere *natural circumstances* of the performances.

Natural circumstances are such as are necessary, or at least, highly expedient for the performance of acts of worship, considered merely as natural actions, and abstracted from their religious design. Such are *time, place, habit, gesture, &c.* Now, where these are not determined by God himself, it is granted, they must be determined by every worshipping society for themselves. I do not find that God hath given authority to any person to determine them for other persons, or any society of men to determine them for other societies; but they must be determined by an agreement of every society for itself. If some few persons in the society will not consent to the agreement of the major part of them, they must *depart*, and join themselves to some other society which is more for their convenience. If some persons will impose the circumstances of worship upon their fellow christians, by a pretended authority, they go beyond the bounds that either the light of nature or scripture allows, and assume such a power over the consciences of men, as I cannot find the chapter and verse where it was given them.

Having said thus much on the *natural circumstances* of social worship, let us enquire, What are *religious ceremonies*. Religious ceremonies are either *real actions*, or *modes and circumstances of actions*, by which some special honour is designed to be paid to God, and therefore God alone can institute them, who alone can determine what shall be honourable to himself. Man cannot appoint them, nor add to them, because he cannot put holiness into any thing, nor make any thing holy or sinful which God hath not made so.

Under the New Testament, the ceremonies distinct from natural religion, whether real actions, or their modes and circumstances, are few and easy; such as the washing with water in baptism, and eating bread and wine at the supper of the Lord, to which we may add, the observation of the first day of the week, in memory of our risen Saviour. Any of the circumstances or modes of action which belong to these religious rites, not determined by scripture, and are not necessary to be determined one way in order to social worship, must be left indifferent to every

every worshipper, according as his conscience or his convenience will direct. I know not any text where God has given any man, or set of men, any power to impose on others. Surely the fourteenth of Romans lays a foundation for this christian liberty.

Since extraordinary gifts and powers are ceased, reason and scripture are our only guides. It is upon this foot every christian church, or every single society of christians, *receiving one another in the Lord*, that is, agreeing to worship, and walk together according to the faith and order of the gospel, whether it is furnished with its proper officers, *i. e.* a bishop, or bishops and deacons, is the highest ecclesiastical power that I know of in the world, which has plain evidence and support in the word of God, or the necessary reason of things. Yet I cannot find that either the light of reason or scripture has given such a church, or its officers, any authority to invent and use, to appoint and command any new ceremonies of divine worship, in any case; nor has it a right to impose on the consciences any such self-invented modes or circumstances of worship, so as to make them holy things, or to oblige any single christian to comply therewith.

The Forms of Christian Communion—with an Attempt towards the Solution of various Questions arising from this Subject.

Question 1.—What is christian communion? And what are the general and agreed terms of it?

Christian communion, in the sense of scripture, is that communion and fellowship which christians have with God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, or with one another, and both are joined together in Jesus, John i. 3. The invisible and spiritual part of this, consists in a participation of the spiritual blessings of the gospel—but this is not our present subject of discourse.

The visible fellowship or communion that christians have with each other, consists chiefly in the participation of the ordinances of the gospel, and mutual assistance for each others good. Having considered briefly the *nature of christian communion*, we must enquire now into the general terms of it.

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The form of our visible communion with christians is— a credible profession of real christianity, or a professed subjection to the gospel of Christ, 2 Cor. ix. 13. Rom. x. 9, 10. that is, such an outward profession of inward and hearty christianity, as gives just and credible evidence that this profession is sincere, and that the person thus professing, is a hearty christian. If a man profess christianity in any manner or form of profession soever, and yet make it plainly appear by other parts of his conduct, that his profession is not sincere and hearty, he has no right to salvation according to these scriptures, and has always been deemed unworthy of christian communion in all the scripture history, and in the best and purest ages of the church. Those that profess they know God, but in works deny him, are to be counted abominable amongst all christians, Tit. i. 17. It is not therefore real inward christianity in the heart that can give any man a right to communion in outward ordinances, unless it be professed in a credible manner to the world; nor can the want of such real and inward religion exclude any person from communion, whilst he makes such a credible profession, for God only is the judge of hearts, and not man; we must act according to outward appearances. Now a credible profession of christianity implies these two things, first, That the matter professed is of such a nature, and declared in such a manner as may render the profession credible: And secondly, There must also be some person or persons to whom that profession must appear credible, and who must be judges of the credibility of it. I shall begin with the last of these, and dispatch it soon, because I mention it only as a needful introduction to the chief questions relating to the particular terms of christian communion.

Question 2d.—Who are the proper judges of the credibility of our profession?

If a credible profession of christianity be the term of communion appointed by Christ in his word, there must be some present and living judges of the credibility of this profession; and I know not who can be so proper to judge as those persons with whom communion is desired. This is not a matter transacted merely between a minister and single christian; for the duties to which we engage ourselves are mutual duties between a community or society

of christians ; therefore, there must be a consent on both sides ; and as a person must judge concerning the society whether he will join himself to it, so the society must judge concerning him, whether they think him fit to be received as one of them.

Now since there can be no regular or proper christian communion held and maintained but in and with a church of Christ, we must enquire into the nature of the christian church, to find out which are the persons in, or of this church, that must judge and declare others fit for communion with it.

(To be continued.)

REMARKS

On Messrs. Mather and Pawson's late Publication, entitled, "*An Affectionate Address.*"

(Continued from page 116.)

THEY honestly confess, that the Kingswood collection has not been so well managed as could have been wished. They say, "It has been a mystery to us all for many years, how so much money was expended, but we could not help ourselves." When our friends are informed, that the late masters of Kingswood-school bought every thing they desired (respecting keeping the house) for themselves, the boys, and visitors, and gave in the bill about once a month to the steward, for him to discharge, the mystery seems to be revealed. Keeping open house in such a situation, where so many would call, when they knew they could be well entertained, with a liberal master, who could be generous at the expence of the connexion, at once reveals the mystery, and causes it to cease for ever. And in my judgment, that school will never be frugally managed, till the master has a given sum for each boy, or be prevented from keeping open house, unless he will do it

at his own expence. Messrs. *Mather* and *Parson's* confident affirmations respecting the school now, would be a great deal more acceptable to us, would they publish a full account, in detail, of what is received and disbursed, then we should be able to form a suitable judgment upon the prudence and frugality of the management.

The 80l. mentioned in Mr. *Rodda's* letter is brought forward again. But it only appears to greater disadvantage. As far as I can recollect, in the last conference, the preachers were not determined, whether the money was lost, or, in the hurry of business, they had made the mistake in adding up the account. It is now asserted, however, that "Mr. *Parson* is happy to say, that in the presence of several witnesses he delivered up the money; nothing was wanting then, as a letter from Mr. *Bradford* received this day bears witness, who was present at that time."—Here we have authority to declare, that the money was delivered up. But these brethren have not told us who received it, nor what became of the eighty pounds afterwards. By concealing the name of the receiver, and refusing to inform us of the particulars of the loss, we are yet in the dark. The eighty pounds are still wanting, and our suspicions are encreased respecting the persons who received it. If they had told us who they had reason to believe peculated this sum, and what means had been used to bring that person or persons to justice, we should have been abundantly better satisfied.

It is amazing that any should cry out so horribly against Mr. *Heamer*, for taking the letter that brought these matters to light, and communicating it to me. At that time a number of the preachers were frequently declaring, that the accounts I had published were notorious falsehoods. The Manchester preachers joined in these declarations. On a sabbath-day, when Mr. *Mather* was administering the sacrament in Salford chapel, Mr. *Heamer* supposing there would not be a sufficiency of wine, went into the vestry, to prepare a supply, in case it should be wanted. He saw a dirty paper lying upon the table, and when he took it up, found it a letter Mr. *Mather* had received some weeks before from Mr. *Rodda*. The letter was open, and much damaged by being worn in Mr. *M*——'s pocket. He had curiosity just to look into the first page, and when he saw the London bull mentioned, he was excited to read on.

Finding

Finding the particulars of that letter such a full confutation of the declaration several of the preachers had made use of, Mr. *Mather* not excepted, he considered it a providential bringing to light from themselves, what was sufficient to establish several of my charges. He advised with many friends, and was pressed upon to keep the letter and communicate it to me. They thought, even an attested copy would not carry that conviction, which the original would effect. Now, I appeal to every impartial reader, whether Mr. *Heamer* ought to be blamed or praised, for bringing forward a letter he providentially met with, to prove from the testimony of the very men that oppose us, the necessity we are under of having our affairs better managed? How Mr. *Mather* should lay this letter so carelessly on the table after he had had it so long in his possession—how Mr. *Heamer* should be the person to meet with it in that place—and how it should fall into my hands, when Mr. *Rodda* had said, “What would a *K.* (a *Kilham*) say, if he knew the particulars of it,” are matters that cannot be resolved in any other way, than ascribing them to a providential discovery. If Mr. *Parvson* could warmly declare, “It was a devilish providence,” it is probable many will be of a contrary opinion.

Before this subject is dismissed, let us make one remark on the following words:—“However, now that grievance is removed, and we can confidently affirm, that every thing in that school is conducted with the greatest prudence and frugality; and at the same time the children were never in better order, or more comfortably provided for in every respect, than they are at present.” If the boys were allowed to write their minds freely to their friends, perhaps a different account would be given. But their masters have so much influence over them, that it is very probable, were they to be found out attempting to communicate the real state of the school to their parents, it would be deemed a crime that could not go unpunished. It seems very singular, that the conference should be so very desirous of keeping up the school at such an extraordinary expence, when the preachers in general would be abundantly better satisfied to educate their children at home, at near half the expence. The reason held out for many years for the continuance of the school, does not now apply to the circuits in general. Then the preachers were for the most part at a distance

from home, and could seldom spend a day with their families; but now, in very many of the circuits, they can spend near half of their time at home. As the people would cheerfully contribute in future to the support and education of the sons of the preachers, were an equitable plan adopted, which would be both pleasing and profitable to the boys and their parents, and advantageous to the connexion at large, it seems the indispensable duty of the conference, to adopt such a plan, as soon as possible.

Let us for a few minutes examine the particulars of the London law-suit. One of the trustees, in London, informed us, that they could not find out the real expence of the suit. On their side, the preachers (including every thing) had about 1100l. to advance, besides paying their own lawyers, and other expences. According to this calculation, the whole could not be less than 2000l. ! But supposing the whole of the two bills was only 1421l. 5s. 7d. were there not other things that made the loss more than 2000l. ? Did not a number of very respectable persons leave the society on that account, and withhold their weekly and quarterly subscriptions ? Did not the trustees put a rent upon the dwelling houses, which it is probable would never have been put upon them, had the chapel continued as it had formerly been. Did not a great part of the congregation leave it in the midst of the disputes, and has not the chapel suffered a very great loss in the seat rents since the contest began ? Is not the congregation, even now, very far from what the congregation was formerly ? Were not several hundred pounds laid out on Spitalfields chapel, which might, and probably would have been given up, had not the contest begun about the new chapel ? Is it possible, in the nature of things, to have two large chapels about half a mile from each other well attended, considering how unpopular Methodism is in London ? Would not the new chapel have been every way sufficient for both the congregations ? And ought not the repairs and rent of that chapel, together with an extra family being fixed there, and supported, to be taken into the account ? If the law-suit, with its consequences upon the society in London, be taken into the account, I apprehend 3000l. would not defray the expences. And can any thing be fairer than to take a full view of the subject, and consider all the loss and expence which attended that
suit?

suit? I apprehend, the person that published the suit cost about 2000l. when all things connected with the subject are properly considered, so far from exaggerating, he has not come up to the whole loss within several hundred pounds.

The following passage ought not to be over-looked by us :—" With regard to the London law-suit, we say nothing to the necessity or propriety of it; but should be glad if it could be everlastingly forgotten. Those persons must bear the blame who were the authors of it, be they who they may. We bless the Lord that we, and many besides us, stand quite clear as to that unhappy piece of business." A few remarks, may place this subject in a suitable view before our people : 1. When the preachers refused to suffer Dr. Whitehead to write Mr. *Wesley's* life, to be sold by us, and treated the executors of his will in a way they did not expect, this grieved a great majority of the trustees, and led them to resolve on such steps which they had not formerly thought on. 2. When Dr. *Coke* and Mr. *Rogers* were allowed to drive furiously in this business, their measures led the majority of the trustees to make a new deed, and increase their number to twenty-five, if I mistake not. 3. At the London conference in 1792, the trustees sought to compromise matters, but a few leading preachers prevented their efforts from being effectual. After other offers had no effect, the trustees requested that a committee of preachers might be appointed to meet a committee of the trustees, not to fix any thing determinately upon the subject, but to hold a conversation upon it. The conference, or rather those that govern it, would not admit of this meeting, unless Dr. *Whitehead* would give up the papers, which Dr. *Coke* and Mr. *Moore* had put into his hands, to help him in writing Mr. *Wesley's* life. 4. When the trustees saw the conference treated them with contempt, and would not so much as condescend to meet a committee of their body, they were driven to the measures which they afterwards pursued. The law-suit commenced, and all the evils that are recorded in the history of that process. 5. Messrs. *Mather* and *Pawson*, were among the leading men that rejected the offer of the committee, notwithstanding Mr. *Benson* warned them, with tears, of the consequences, and yet they now declare, " We bless the Lord, that we, and many

many besides us, stand clear, as to that unhappy piece of business." No man could be clear that voted against a committee of the conference, meeting an equal number of the trustees, for a friendly conversation. And as Messrs. *Mather* and *Pawson* were among the leading preachers that opposed this measure, which was the cause of the law-suit, they cannot be innocent on this head. I apprehend, had they joined Mr. Benson, in setting their faces against the measures of a few that they countenanced, the suit would have been prevented for ever. How far they can with propriety declare, they had no hand in this business, is a mystery to many.

This law-suit, which the trustees were driven to, has been attended with such effects, that leading preachers may with propriety declare, "We should be glad if it could be everlastingly forgotten." It has brought many things to light, which were formerly hidden: 1. It has convinced the nation at large, that our famous deed-poll is good for nothing; and shewn, that nothing short of an act of parliament can make us a distinct people in the eye of the law. 2. It has proved *to a demonstration*, that all the houses fixed on the conference plan, are *absolutely* in the hands of their respective trustees. This is so clear, that the preachers will not come forward to controvert it, though many of them endeavour to deny it in private. And however *the farce* of fixing houses on that plan is continued in some places, it is well known, that they all are in the hands of the trustees, and that the preachers have no power over them, but what the trustees are pleased to allow them. 3. This being manifest, the conference cannot claim a right to preach in any house. They can only do it by the sufferance of the trustees and people. Though the expence of the law-suit was very considerable, these discoveries are deemed by many to be a suitable recompence. And while the leading preachers with the suit "could be everlastingly forgotten," they wish from their hearts, that *the happy consequences of it may be eternally remembered*.

After all that has been mentioned, the book-room is a subject that will require much investigation. The book stock, according to the catalogue prices, at the death of Mr. *Wesley*, would not be less than 12,000*l*. Perhaps the real value to the preachers, would not be less than 8000*l*. Since his death, the sale of books has exceedingly encreased.

ed. It is said in this account, that 6598l. 4s. 9d. have been received the last year. The monies paid from it are detailed. It cannot with any degree of justice be supposed, that the paper of the above mentioned sum cost 1920l. 3s. 8d. Every person acquainted with printing is conscious, that this sum for paper is very high, in proportion to the other. But 1940l. 12s. 3d. for rent of houses, printing-office, letters, &c. besides 330l. for servants' wages for one year, is an incredible sum. Can any man suppose, that house rent, printing-office, &c. &c. for one year, could be 2270l. 12s. 3d.? If these bills have been paid, they cannot have been contracted on account of the sale of the books given in by Mr. Whitfield. As the printing-office belongs to the connexion, the paper is bought in by large quantities, at reasonable prices, and very large editions are printed of most of the books, which are principally circulated among us; therefore, the benefit of the book-room, at a reasonable calculation, could not be less than 3200l. for the last year, besides paying for every thing that could reasonably be charged for paper, wages, &c. &c.

There are two passages in this pamphlet which ought not to be over-looked, upon this head. In the fifth page they say, "For strange as it may appear, whatever profits may arise from the sale of books *now*, may fairly be considered as the fruit and labour of the preachers, and therefore their own property to all intents and purposes." In the 17th and 18th pages we have these words: "Our Ashton friends may be satisfied, who think because some of them purchase a book when they happen to want one, that therefore they have a just right to know what use is made of the profits arising from the whole trade. A thought we really believe [It first appeared in the letter signed Philadelphus, and only belonged to the Ashton friends, as they reprinted that letter] which never entered into any man's mind before; it is quite new, and entirely their own, we are persuaded. We buy a book now and then of the booksellers in London, but we must acknowledge, that when we had received our book, the gentleman had a just right to dispose of the purchase money as he should see good."——

Upon this passage let us remark, 1. The book stock, which Mr. *Wesley* left at his death, was not given to the preachers

preachers *alone*, but was designed for helping forward the work at large. 2. As this was the case, the profits arising from the sale of books cannot justly be said to be the preachers, exclusive of the people. As the stock at Mr. *Wesley's* death was left to carry on the work, the different societies have a right to claim part of the profits, for the purposes specified in Mr. *Wesley's* will, and in the deed that set aside the will. 3. Whether Messrs. *Mather* and *Parwson* know it or not, there are many persons in our connexion, who take in the magazine, and buy other books, as a deed of charity, on purpose to help forward the work of God. It is very probable, that half of the books would not be sold that are now disposed of, if the people did not think it an act of charity. Indeed this idea is held out to our people and others, when subscriptions are sought for the magazine, &c. Our hearers are told, the whole of the profits are devoted to the work of God. 4. The parallel will not hold good, respecting our buying books at a shop in London. They get their bread by their trade, and we are conscious, that no person has a right to inquire how they spend the profits of their trade. But the sale of the Methodist books is professedly for charitable purposes. The book stock was left to the connexion at large to help to spread the gospel. Thousands buy books on purpose to help by it in publishing the good tidings of salvation. And they have a right to know how the money is applied. 5. The Dissenters publish a magazine, and appropriate the benefits of it to charitable purposes. They publish a list once a year, of what they receive, and how it is disbursed. The subscribers have every reason they could wish for, to believe, that their charity is well applied.

The following are very strong expressions ; " Let no one blame those who have laboured as for life, in order to make peace, to heal the wound, and to remove the rock of offence out of the way. However, we have this satisfaction, if our salvation had depended on it, we could have done no better."—Many expressions of this nature are found in the publications Messrs. *Mather* and *Parwson* have circulated. In regard to the collections they say, " Whether the money exactly answers the account or not, we are sure that none of it has been taken away by any one." If this were the case, how did the eighty pounds

pounds of the Kingswood-school money leave us. Mr. *Fawson* brings evidence it was paid in. The conference bear witness that above this sum was missing. If none took it away, it acted according to the declaration of Solomon: "It made itself wings, and flew away."—When men declare, "If our salvation depended on it we could not have done better," upon trivial occasions, we have a right to examine their works. And should we find, that many things might have been better managed, we shall be able to discern, how improper it is to make use of words that ought by no means to be employed on such occasions. For instance, Have you not heard these brethren and others frequently declare, that all the monies collected from the people, are applied, as far as they possibly can be, to the best of purposes. At the time of the conference the people are entreated to give to the utmost of their power, in the public collections, to help the cause of God. The expences of preachers attending, over and above what the friends contribute, are held out to be very considerable; and if the people either love the Redeemer or the gospel, they are pressed upon to give liberally on the occasion. The people taking it for a fact that these things are so, exert themselves beyond what prudence would dictate. Out of the money thus collected, however, there are bills to pay, which many of the preachers would be ashamed to mention in a pulpit. The barber's bill for shaving, &c. the preachers, at Bristol conference was about twenty pounds. It was about the same sum last Manchester conference. When the people give liberally, do they imagine that the barber will have this sum for his trouble and expence? Ought not the preachers that beg at the time of the conference, to address their congregations, in language to this effect?—"Brethren, we are under the necessity of intreating you to exert yourselves in helping in such a noble charity. Unless you give liberally, we shall not be able to get comfortably through. To give you some idea of our present necessities, we will only mention one thing:—We, *the self-denied ministers of Jesus Christ, in the course of ten days or a fortnight*, have a barber's bill of about twenty pounds to discharge. If this bill be so much, what must our other expences be? As you see the absolute necessity of your helping largely on the occasion, we hope your generosity

nerosity will exceed our most sanguine wishes, that we may be properly shaved, and that the barbers, &c. may be well paid in due time." I mention this instance to prove, that great professions of "laying out every thing to the glory of God," and other expressions of this nature, are very unsuitable; and are abundantly more calculated to deceive, than to edify.

Let us reflect a few moments on their expressions respecting the rules of the last conference: They say, "A spirit of jealousy and distrust so exceedingly prevails at present, that the most laudable designs of the conference are misunderstood, and the best rules they can make are misrepresented."—They begin with the rule for local preachers:—"Some, but very few of the local preachers, have taken the liberty to make considerable excursions into the different circuits, and have lived upon, and collected money from the people to a considerable amount. To prevent our people from being imposed upon, these rules were made and printed in the minutes, page 28. But it seems these rules have given great offence to some of the honest, upright local preachers."—How easy it would have been, to have made rules to have prevented these local preachers from acting such a base part. But the conference made a *positive law*, "That no local preacher shall go into any other circuit without a recommendation from the superintendent where he lives; and unless he have permission from the superintendent where he is invited."—It is this absolute rule which gives offence. Because the local preachers in many places clearly perceive the design of it. They cannot for a moment imagine that such a positive law is made to restrict the few that rove from place to place. They consider it as made to bring all the local preachers into full subjection to the superintendents. [See the remarks on these rules in a former number.] I cannot rescind any thing advanced there, but still maintain the whole in all its latitude.

They say farther, "Very improper persons have written and circulated printed letters, and have put the connexion to very great expence. To remedy this evil, the rule in page 32 was made. But this also gives offence, and is not to be endured, as it restrains the liberties of the people." In Manchester, 1795, it was enacted, "No printed letter or pamphlet should be circulated among

among us, without the author's name being at it, and the postage or carriage paid." This rule had not been made six weeks before Messrs. *Mather* and *Parson* broke it, by sending printed letters through the connexion, without paying the postage. But how can these brethren declare, the rule in the 32d page was made to prevent the spread of circular letters? If this was one object the rule had in view, others are both implied and expressed. The rule requires, "That no man, on any account or occasion, shall circulate letters, call meetings, do, or attempt to do any thing new, without the conference first appointing it." If Messrs. *Mather* and *Parson's* declaration be true, how unfortunate it is for the conference, that they cannot make laws to mean what they express. This rule expresses many things, but they say it was made to prevent the circulation of letters, and refer the rule to that *only*. Suppose the legislators of this nation were to enact a law to prevent cheating, robbery, and murder; should the people complain against the rule; in order to pacify them, were two of the principal legislators to come forward, and by a printed letter declare, that as there was much cheating in the nation, the law was only made to prevent that; robbery and murder had nothing to do with the subject; what would the rest of the legislators and the people at large say of them? The case is similar respecting this rule. Yet when the question is asked, "Why do you not admit of lay-delegates, to help you in your matters?" These worthy fathers peevishly reply, "Truly we want no assistance."—Whoever reads their rules, and the exposition given in the pamphlet under consideration, will be able to judge, whether or not they have need of assistance.

The following passage is very curious:—"We seriously declare, as in the presence of God, that although we have attended near forty conferences, we never knew a single rule made (where the people were concerned) but their interest and happiness were kept in view, and the prosperity of the work of God was principally considered; and so it always ought to be. And we would ask any reasonable man under heaven, If the preachers are not the proper representatives of the people, who are? Who, in the name of common sense, are so likely to have their interests at heart, as their spiritual fathers?" Let us make a few remarks upon this passage: 1. The present Me-

Methodist preachers are not the spiritual fathers of, perhaps, one tenth of the people now in society. Thousands have joined us by means of those who now rest from their labours.—And tens of thousands more, by the influence of the blessing of God attending prayer-meetings. 2. If “common sense” requires spiritual fathers to be the representatives of their children, these fathers ought not to assume a right to represent those that do not stand in this relation to them. 3. I apprehend, that even spiritual fathers, ought not to claim a right to represent their children, but during the time of their non-age. Our fathers according to the flesh, only claim this right till we come of age. Our spiritual fathers ought to claim no more. 4. The non-age of Methodism, as it refers to most of the principal places, is past. The societies are old and experienced.—Many of them were established long before half of the preachers were born, that are now called their spiritual fathers. 5. “In the name of common sense,” have the preachers a right to represent the people in general, without being fairly elected to this office? If they claim it without the consent of the different societies, is it not usurpation? 6. If rules are made in the conference, “where the people have not a single voice or representative,” however their “interest and happiness may be kept in view, and the prosperity of the work of God be principally considered,” according to the views of the preachers, yet, as they are not made by the concurrence of the different societies, our friends cannot be satisfied. 7. Let any examine the rules and laws made since Mr. Wesley’s death, particularly the rules of the last conference, and they will see, how far the “interest and happiness” of the people have been kept in view. When the priests of the church of Rome made very arbitrary, oppressive, and even bloody laws, the same declarations have been made use of. Reason and common sense both declare, that the people ought to have persons chosen from among themselves to sit in district meetings, and in the conference.

The following expressions are by no means to be overlooked: “We will venture to affirm, from our knowledge of the preachers, that they have on all occasions shewn themselves ready to reform whatever was amiss, according to their power. And have always adopted
such

such rules and regulations, as tended to promote peace and love, and the increase of the work." Have not the people complained of a number of evils that have crept into the connexion in a variety of circuits without meeting with any redress? Are there not many things *amiss* in our constitution, which the preachers refuse to reform? And when they have made rules and laws to meet the views of the people in some instances, has this been done cheerfully, or through constraint? Were even the rules of pacification, which are so much exalted, cheerfully entered upon by the preachers in general? And are there not a number of grievances still existing, which have been loudly complained of, that the leading preachers refuse to redress? If Messrs. *Mather* and *Pawson*, with a few others, would come forward cheerfully, and do their utmost to remove every thing that is oppressive to the different societies, they would rejoice the hearts of thousands, and heal the wounds which now afflict the connexion. But while they, and a few of their brethren, only *profess* that they have formerly shewn themselves ready to help, without coming forward to do it now, the minds of our most sensible friends cannot be satisfied.

Perhaps the following exhortation will be properly considered by all who wish to promote the interest of Methodism:—

"Brethren, for God's sake, consider whereunto all this jealousy and evil-surmising tends. Open your eyes before it be too late. Do not drive all the honest and pious men among us out of the vineyard. You really distress us beyond measure. Consider we have our trials still. Do not so greatly increase them. We have not deserved this at your hands, &c." Does not the conduct of these worthy fathers, and several others, naturally create jealousies, and evil-surmisings among our people? While they resolve to "rule them, without consulting them," and to form laws in district meetings, and in the conference, which are binding upon them, where they have not "a single voice, nor a single representative," is it possible to prevent jealousies and evil-surmisings? The people in many places have already opened their eyes, and they are astonished at the steps which have been taken by a few leading men in the connexion. The laws and rules of the last conference, so far from removing jealousies and evil-surmisings, have

exceedingly increased them. While their eyes remain open, they cannot be imposed upon. They do by no means wish to "drive all the honest and pious men among us out of the vineyard," but to have a plan established to promote piety and honesty among us for ever. If Messrs. *Mather* and *Parvson*, with a few of their brethren, are exceedingly distressed, on account of a prospect of their *undue power and influence* being weakened or lost, this may be a great trial to them. If they suppose the people have no right to wish for their lawful privileges, because this "distresses them beyond measure," we may hope the Lord will give them grace to bear this with christian patience. The plan which many of our most sensible friends wish to have established, is not in the least calculated to drive "honest and pious men" from among us; it is rather calculated to banish persons of a different description, and lead men that are truly pious, and strictly honest, to desire a place among us. God forbid that our friends should wish to "break the hearts of their old tried servants, not to say fathers," by following "this poor, vain, self-sufficient young man," in any thing that is wrong! But if he has proposed any thing that would promote the glory of God, and the real interests of true religion, there will be no harm in following him, so far as he follows Christ. And should any old preachers break their hearts on account of their loss of undue power and influence, the people will be the innocent cause of this misfortune.

In the last page they assure us, "with the greatest sincerity, that we neither wish to deceive, nor keep you in the dark respecting any one thing whatsoever, which may promote your happiness; nor do we wish to reign any where but in your esteem and affection. For, as was justly observed last conference, we can have no other influence over you, but that which our labours for your good, and the Spirit of God give us." If the conference "neither wish to deceive nor keep us in the dark respecting any one thing whatsoever, which may promote our happiness," why do they oppose lay-delegates, and refuse to admit them to share in managing all their affairs? They will give the people the greatest proof of their sincerity, by cheerfully allowing men, chosen from the societies, to be present in all their meetings, and to know

know that every thing is transacted in the fear of God? Can they imagine, that our happiness is unconnected with the management of temporal affairs? If they wish "to reign only in the esteem and affection" of the people, why do they oppose their will in so many things, and refuse to grant their lawful privileges? Do either "their labours for our good, or the Spirit of God," authorise them to rule us without our being consulted—and to make laws and rules every year to bind the societies, when they never hear of those laws or rules till they are published in the minutes? Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. And can it be supposed for a moment, that the divine Spirit gives the Methodist conference a power to make oppressive laws for the people? Neither past labours, nor the Spirit of God, can give to a few preachers the power they at present exercise over a number of their brethren, and the people at large?

In the same page we have these words: "Remember the old proverb, "Rome was not built in a day." Have a little patience, and you will have all you can desire, which will tend to promote your present and eternal happiness. The preachers will gratify you in every thing which they can with a good conscience." If Rome was not built in a day, might not the Methodist preachers *in one day* redress the grievances the people complain of, and establish an equitable plan? Would it not be possible, in one day, to satisfy the minds of the different societies, and lead them to be thankful on that account? This passage intimates, that the people have not every thing which "tends to promote their present and future happiness."—And at the same time insinuates, that the preachers have power to administer, in some measure, what is wanting. If this be the case, instead of saying, "Have a little patience, and you will have all," ought they not to come forward immediately, and "gratify them with every thing" they can administer "with a good conscience?"—Is it right to withhold from them any of their privileges for a moment, when their happiness depends upon them? If the preachers really wish to "gratify the people as far as they can with a good conscience," why do they not admit of a delegation from them, to form a proper constitution, mutually agreed upon; and establish peace as soon as possible?

In concluding, to shew they "ought to have some degree of authority," they quote the following texts of scripture :—

1 Thess. v. 12. Heb. xiii. 17. Rom. xvi. 17, 18. And they finish the whole with, 2 Thess. ii. 15. I shall just quote a few passages, and conclude my remarks on this pamphlet : "Be not many masters.—Call no man Master upon earth, for one is your Master, even Christ, and ye all are brethren.—He that would be greatest must be servant of all.—Not as lords over God's heritage, but examples of the flock.—We are your servants for Christ's sake.—Not walking in craftiness—nor handling the word of God deceitfully ; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.—Be ye followers of us, as we are of Christ.—Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good.—The Bereans were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so : therefore many of them believed.—And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified."

A. KILHAM.

Manchester, Nov. 8, 1796.

Postscript.

A Few days ago, I was favoured with a paper, designed as an answer to the Manchester or Salford address, signed by a number of local preachers, leaders, stewards, and trustees. I make no doubt but the persons who sanctioned the address, are well able to reply to this protest ; and if they suppose it of consequence, they will not be backward to come forward again, in defence of those principles, which ought

ought to be held sacred, by every person that loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

The addenda of the protest was written by Mr. Mather, and ought to be seriously considered by every person, that loves the Methodist connexion. The first four paragraphs do not much affect the subjects which at present agitate our body. But other passages ought to be carefully examined. He says, "The moment that Mr. K——'s scheme of independence takes place, which though he had not so fully avowed in his publications, we were not all so blind as not to discern it through the veil he put upon it, in the whole of our proceedings with him; yet it was not *for this*, as it is now said, that we expelled (and some add) persecute him, although we hear this now held out to the independent ministers and people, as a reason why they should break off all that union and good understanding, that has been for some time increasing between us and them, by encouraging a person in their pulpits, whose professed design is—to disturb the peace of our societies. How far this goes toward promoting christian forbearance among the different professors of religion, I leave others (who are candid) to say. Meantime, this is the less to be wondered at, if those of our own community tell us in their publications, 'that they come forward at this time in support of primitive Methodism,' and in their application for pulpits, make use of these arguments: viz. 'We, (the conference preachers) have expelled and persecuted him for his independent principles;' and on that account they open their doors for him:—so said a respectable member of that community a few days ago. I do not urge this against independency or independents, as such: No! I allow every man the privilege I take, of thinking for himself; yet, as a 'primitive Methodist,' I magnify my office in informing all under my care, that they may not be led astray under the specious guise of supporting primitive Methodism."

Upon this passage let us remark, 1. When the friends published, "That I was a person of independent principles," no person, without torturing their words to mean what they never designed, can for a moment imagine, that they meant I held the principles which many of the Dissenters embrace. Mr. Mather himself must know, that this expression only implies, that the principles I have embraced

ed and published respecting our affairs, are held by me independent of any person, or without fear of their consequences: and that my sentiments are both candid and liberal, as they refer to all sects and parties. 2. The different Dissenters, who have kindly opened their chapels to me, never were applied to, as Mr. *Mather* insinuates, because of my holding the same sentiments, which that respectable body of Dissenters, called Independents, hold. They opened their chapels on the request of several of our friends, because they saw nothing in all the conference has published that reflected upon my moral character. They never supposed that I should preach any doctrines contrary to those which are held by the Methodists. 3. The Dissenters, by admitting me into their pulpits, never designed "to break off all that good understanding that has been for some time increasing between us and them." They never supposed that Mr. *Mather* and his friends, would take such offence as to declare, "The union is broken between us," on account of my preaching in their pulpits. Because they very well know, that in many places (and some not far from Manchester) the Methodists admitted me into their chapels, and gave me all the encouragement in their power. 4. I never professed a design, nor had it in my heart, "to disturb the peace of our societies;" on the contrary, my professed design has ever been, to awaken the attention of the people to existing evils, which threaten to ruin our cause, that they might help in removing them. And the Dissenters, seeing my design, might easily imagine, that "christian-forgiveness among different professors of religion," might be promoted, by admitting me into their chapels. 5. I never masked a scheme of Independency in any thing I have published, to impose upon the people. My sentiments are openly avowed, in "The out-lines of a constitution." There was no veil put upon any thing I have written. My crime has consisted in *unveiling many things* that were formerly hid from the people. And for this I have been expelled, and am now persecuted. 6. We consider "primitive Methodism" both to admit and require, that the preachers and people should follow the openings of divine providence. No "specious guise" is made use of to impose on our friends. However others may be in the habit of using "specious guise," instead of argument, we have reason to bless God, the principles

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we avow, have no need of help from this quarrel. 7. If Mr. *Mather* "magnify his office," by warning the people against the very things that are calculated to promote their happiness, ought they to be deterred from this part of their duty by what he has written? Is there any argument in saying, "Be you assured, my very dear friends, your brethren who signed the protest are fully right in what they say, as to the intended effects of the address on Methodist principles, discipline, and doctrines. My dearly beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and unmoveable in the truth you have received, always abounding in its belief and practice, seeing that many of you have had long proof that your labour therein has not been in vain in the Lord?" The intended effects of the address ought to be deduced from its matter. And if that is examined with an unprejudiced mind, the happiness and prosperity of our connexion, are the objects the address had in view. Quoting St. Paul's words, "They zealously affect you, but not well, but that you may affect them, &c." may pass for argument with some, but not with those who determine to think for themselves.

Mr. *Mather* says, "The address proposes delegates: First, 'To be chosen every year. Secondly, to sit in conference to assist their deliberations! Thirdly, to have equal power, by vote, or otherwise, with the preachers!'"——This has a very plausible sound, but let it be explained or unveiled, by inquiring, first, What gave rise to this idea? Secondly, What are these brethren to assist in? What are their qualifications? "Well informed men." Who are to be their electors? What gave rise to this idea? A suspicious jealousy of the ability, integrity, and uprightness of the conference, raised in the minds of a few restless brethren, by sundry inflammatory publications. This fire has been kept up by the same fuel, which has been continually heaping upon it, with the oil of defamation, slander, reviling, and falsehood. But after all that has been said, does it really appear, that the conference is so weak and wicked, as to need such assistance or guards? I hope not! What are these brethren to assist the conference in? If it is designed to form a new constitution, or form of church government; our venerable father viewed this as a task too arduous for him, and therefore declined it. My opinion is, that few, if any, amongst

amongst preachers or people, are better informed than he was; or if we judge we are, I have only to say—first, That such as I and others, have, and do desire *an executive* government among us, yet this is with no eye (on my part) to any independent form of church government. As we have no desire higher, than being a society, such as we have ever been, for whose government we are possessed of sufficient rules, except in the intervals of conference; and whenever, as a body, we agree to have this, we can deliberate upon it to our own satisfaction, and the good of all for whom we are concerned; none will, I presume, think conference too small a number for a work of this nature; they oft feel the contrary in other cases!—Are these men better “informed” than many of those are concerning what in common comes under their deliberation? Do they really know more about the spiritual or temporal concerns of the connexion than the preachers do? Have they these more at heart than the preachers? Can, and will they do more, or half as much for them, as the preachers have done, and are daily doing? But were such needful, First, Where would they be got? Secondly, is it probable such men would be elected from year to year? or if they were, would they accept of it? I would not be misunderstood, as if I intimated, that if such a thing were needful that the Methodist connexion could not furnish well informed men, and men who so love it, and those who are engaged with them in the same cause, that they would not spare any pains to serve either: No! I am sure were conference to desire such, they would soon be supplied with proper assistants, but not as *spies* over them, or usurpers of their right, claiming, “by vote, or otherwise, an equal right with the preachers,” in what *solely* concerns them. All who are “well informed” have not, first, these jealousies! Secondly, have sufficient work of their own. Thirdly, are assured, that none are so competent for this labour as the men whose lives are spent in it—whose property is entirely devoted to it—whose *brethren* and *children* are only concerned in collecting, *needing or receiving* all the money which passes through their hands!

(To be concluded in the next number.)

The

The following Circular Letter has been distributed at SALFORD, MANCHESTER; and at a Meeting held in consequence thereof, all the Particulars were adopted, with Amendments:—

SALFORD, MANCHESTER,

SIR,

November 11, 1796.

YOU, with such friends as you choose to invite (being members of the Methodist Societies) are respectfully requested to attend a meeting of Trustees, Local Preachers, Leaders, and Private Members, to be holden in the Court-House, in Salford, on Thursday the 17th instant, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, to consider the following, and any other particular you may choose to bring forward, relative to the disputes existing amongst us; and to form (if possible) a plan upon which the two parties may be re-united:

It has been frequently asked, "What are the things you wish to have established for our future prosperity?" Are not the following particulars expressive of every thing we want?—

I. Let *positive* laws be enacted by the conference, that no person shall be received to, or excluded from, the connexion, but by the concurrence of a meeting of the Leaders, &c. called for that purpose.

II. That no Leaders or Stewards, shall be appointed to, or removed from their office, but by the concurrence of the major part of a full Leaders' Meeting.

III. That no person shall be allowed to exercise as Local Preacher, without the approbation of a major part of a full Leaders' Meeting—and that no person receive a plan as a Local Preacher, until he is mentioned and approved in a Quarterly Meeting.

IV. That no person shall go out to travel, *under any pretence whatever*, until he is both mentioned and approved, by the Leaders' and Quarterly Meeting.

V. That no person received on trial, shall be admitted into full connexion, without being recommended by the two last circuits where he has travelled, expressed in writing, from

from their Quarterly Meetings, to the District Meeting, and the Conference.

VI. That no Circuit Stewards shall be appointed to, or removed from their office, without the concurrence of the Quarterly Meeting; and that no Steward abide longer than two years in that office, unless in particular cases, mutually agreed upon by the brethren that are present on the occasion.

VII. That two or more Delegates, chosen by the people, *without the least interference, directly or indirectly from the Preachers*, be appointed by each Circuit, to attend the District Meetings, possessed of equal powers with the Preachers, and required to assist in transacting all the affairs which are brought into those meetings.

VIII. That these Delegates, when assembled together at a District Meeting, shall elect two or more from their body to attend the Conference. These Delegates shall possess equal powers with the Preachers *in every respect*. They shall carry in all the public collections, and assist in disbursing them. No new laws or rules shall be made without their concurrence. And all the laws and rules respecting *discipline*, that already exist, shall only be binding, by being revised with *their special sanction*; particularly those laws and rules made since the death of Mr. Wesley.

If the brethren will carefully examine these things, previous to our meeting together next Thursday (and any other they may deem important) it is probable, we shall all see into the *propriety and necessity* of requiring *positive laws*, in all these particulars. Because saying, "It has been our general custom," or, that "It is our rule," to engage in certain things, *where there is no law to bind*, appears only calculated to impose upon weak minds.—Whereas, were *positive laws enacted*, by the mutual concurrence of the Delegates and Preachers, that could not be violated with *impunity*, the affairs of the connexion would be properly managed, and the people would cheerfully unite with the Preachers to help forward the Work of GOD.

By Order of the Committee appointed at Red-Hall.

No. V.

THE
Methodist Monitor.

“ Brethren, for God’s sake open your Eyes in Time, before it be for ever too late, and endeavour to see Persons and Things as they really are.—If you think it not safe to trust the Conference with your spiritual Privileges, then, in the name of the Lord, I intreat you to keep them in your own Power.”

Mr. John Pawson’s excellent Pamphlet.

REMARKS

On Messrs. Mather and Pawson’s late Publication, entitled, “ An Affectionate Address.”

(Continued from page 154.)

WERE they chosen from year to year, is there not every reason to believe, the men *worst* “ informed” but “ well” impregnated with jealousy, and principles of independency, &c. would be most likely to be chosen? As they, and their friends would push them forward to an office, whereof their own spirits would prepare them to accept! but could ‘ primitive Methodism’ unite with these, or they with them? I fear not! Are the connexion at large their children, who have been, and still are endeavouring to divide and destroy them? Are the preachers *in want* of those who have abused and traduced their brethren?

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If not, what is to be looked for? Are they to deliberate upon spending their own money or our's? Our's, to be sure! And who cannot see, none are so fit to spend as they who get the money, especially, when a very large share of it is *their* property? Some reason would appear for these delegates, would they, as men and christian brethren, come forward, and say,—‘ These preachers have spended many thousands within these last thirty-three years,—First, in supporting their worn-out, with the widows and children of their deceased brethren who have died in our work! Secondly, in paying the debts of their and our venerable father, who, after sixty years’ labour amongst us, died (as it were) insolvent! Thirdly, in using their utmost efforts to carry on the great and glorious work he left them engaged in. And we see from all their exertions, they are in danger of being forely put too. In as much, as we gather from some of the best informed and disinterested among them, all, and more than the book-room can reasonably be supposed to yield, in the incoming year, is already mortgaged,—First, In seventy-one wives, 800l. and odd. Second, In half the allowance for the superannuated and widows, which could not be paid at conference, as it usually has been, viz. 400l. and odd. Thirdly, A sum borrowed from Kingswood collection (which is intended for the whole of the year) of 500l. And, fourthly, If allowed after so many years, to draw any interest for their money laid out, 400l. These sums amount to 2100l. In this, so very critical occasion, therefore, let us all unite, and from ourselves choose delegates, who shall—First, give the conference security for the 8000l. expended as above, and for which they have none but the books. Second, See that they have their interest paid annually, together with proper security for any farther sum they may advance in the same way. Third, We will unite with them in making the usual contributions larger, and the sale of the books more productive, so that the whole might answer every purpose of carrying on so large a work, as it now is, a burthen, which will in its nature be too heavy for one part of the body to bear.’

I have quoted this dark, mysterious passage at full length, as it seems a bulwark raised on purpose to prevent lay-delegates from having a place in district meetings, and in the conference. We have here a mass of heterogeneous matter,

ter, calculated to darken counsel by a multitude of words. It may confuse and perplex, but it cannot enlighten. It may help to keep our people ignorant of several things, but it is impossible for them to understand, from this account, the nature of the dispute which agitates our body, as it refers to delegates. The grand palladium of the leading preachers at present, is, to have secret district meetings, and secret conferences. They are conscious, were delegates once admitted only to be present while their affairs are transacted, their power and influence would be weakened: And if they were once allowed to have equal powers in those meetings with themselves, they should be reduced to the standard of primitive ministers of the gospel. They would have all things common. None would strive to lord it over the consciences of their brethren. There would be no masters in the church. He that is greatest, would be servant of all. As the subject of delegates is so very important, let us make a few remarks upon this passage, that our minds may not be biased in any respect, from that simplicity and godly sincerity, which ought to possess us on all occasions.

1. Mr. Mather insinuates the Methodists have not a proper form of church government. Speaking of the delegates attending the conference, he says, 'If it be designed to form a new constitution or form of church government; our venerable father viewed this as a task too arduous for him, and therefore declined it, &c.'—

If we have no suitable form of church government, because Mr. Wesley considered it a task too arduous for him to undertake *alone*, is this any reason why we should continue in this state? Might not the wisdom of the preachers, and the wisdom of delegates, chosen from among the people, form a suitable constitution for the connexion? 2. Is it not highly reasonable, that the people, who support the preachers, and bear the expence of the connexion, should have a share in the 'choice of their *own* officers—the formation of their *own* laws—and in the disbursement of their *own* property?' If a form of church government, or a new constitution is wanting, ought not delegates from the people, to meet with the preachers, and establish such laws and rules as will give general satisfaction? And ought not the people, by their representatives, to have a share in the executive, as well as in the legislative part of the constitution?—

3. Mr. Mather asks a number

ber of questions, which have nothing to do with the subject, calculated to prevent the people from seeing it in a proper light! He asks, 'What gave rise to this idea?—What are these brethren to assist in?—Does it really appear that the conference is so weak and wicked, as to need such assistants or *guards*?—Are these men better informed than many of those are, concerning what in common comes under deliberation? &c. &c.'—What have questions of this nature to do with the subject? Whatever gave rise to the idea, the sensible part of the Methodists are awakened from their sleep, and are now conscious, that they ought not to be ruled any longer without being consulted. Is it reasonable, that the Methodist societies should place implicit confidence in their preachers, and leave the whole management of their affairs to be transacted by them? Does not reason and common sense, setting the scriptures aside, direct that the body of people, composing the different societies, should have men chosen from among themselves, to unite with the preachers, and to transact all their affairs by mutual agreement? And are not all the questions Mr. Mather asks, calculated to puzzle the subject, and throw it into a mist? And are not the questions he asks, unworthy of any farther notice, than to shew, that when a bad cause wants supporting, counsel must be darkened by a multitude of words?—4. He endeavours to work upon the passions of the people, by insinuating, that they have no need of such help. He says, 'Do they really know more of the temporal and spiritual concerns of the connexion than the preachers do? Have they these more at heart than the preachers?—Can, and will they do more, or half so much, as the preachers have done, and are daily doing?' If the preachers are so well qualified, and love the people so tenderly, why do they make such poor work in detailing their accounts? Messrs. Mather and Pawson's Address brings forward a new statement, that contradicts the former, and is calculated to raise suspicions in all who read it. If they love the people, and care so much for their welfare, what is the reason that they make laws, without their knowledge or consent, to bind and oppress them! There never was such demonstrative proof given of the want of lay-delegates, as the last Minutes and the Affectionate Address manifest. In the Conference, in the Minutes, and Messrs. Mather and

Pawson

Pawson, in their Address, had studied to convince the people, that they ought to elect and send suitable men to the conference to help in transacting all their affairs, surely, they could not have done it more effectually than they have already done!——5. Does not Mr. Mather insinuate, that such men as would be necessary, could not be found? or if they were, they would not accept of the charge? He speaks as though the men appointed would be *guards* and *spies*, well impregnated with jealousy and independent principles. They are considered as men who wish to ‘divide and destroy’ the preachers. They are represented as having ‘traduced and abased their brethren.’ What is all this designed for? Is it not to sink the friends of the societies into contempt; as men either too weak to act as delegates, or possessed of bad principles, that would not refuse to comply with any thing that would injure the preachers?——6. It is well known by the people in general, that district meetings are adequate for every thing that can happen between the conferences; provided delegates from the different societies were allowed to attend, possessed of equal powers with the preachers. Nothing can be wanting but a proper representative body, from the societies, equal to the number of preachers. They would be able to adjust every thing that could possibly happen, till the conference should return. This plan is simple and easy. It can operate at once, and be of infinite service to the connexion. It has nothing of priestly dignity, nor intrigue in it. It is highly reasonable and scriptural. But as it does not suit the views of many of the leading preachers, it is considered as impracticable, and consequently exploded.——7. On the other hand, Mr. Mather is not ashamed to avow, that ‘I, and others have and do desire an *executive* government amongst us—and whenever, as a body, we agree to have this, we can deliberate upon it to our own satisfaction, and the good of all for whom we are concerned.’ While the people have not ‘a single voice or representative in either the district meetings, or in the conference;’ a few of the preachers may wish to have such an executive head as I have described in the Progress of Liberty, but were a scriptural and equitable plan adopted, this would be extremely unnecessary. This is only the bishop-plan under a new name. It is to be hoped that the people will be called to deliberate upon it, before they are

called to groan under its influence. And when once the different societies examine the subject, they will see at once, that this is a new species of popery and prelacy, that is seeking to find a place among us. Whatever fine name this limb of popery assumes, our friends are so far awake as to see through the scheme, and to oppose its operation.——8. One would suppose by what Mr. Mather says, that all or most of the Methodist preachers lost a great deal of property, by being engaged as itinerants. He puts these words into the mouth of his supposed delegates: ‘These preachers have expended many thousands within these last thirty-three years,—First, In supporting their worn-out, with the widows and children of their deceased brethren, who have died in our work! Secondly, In paying the debts of their, and our venerable father, who, after sixty years labour among us, died (as it were) insolvent! Thirdly, In using their utmost efforts to carry on the great and glorious work he left them engaged in, &c.’——I would seriously ask, Are the body of Methodist preachers in better or worse circumstance since they begun to travel? Are Mr. Mather, and several of the leading preachers, as individuals, great losers by travelling among us? It is probable, that the body of Methodist preachers are worth five or six times as much property, (which they have acquired by marriage or other ways) than they would have had, if they had never come out to travel. Have not the people cheerfully subscribed the many thousands which Mr. Mather says have been expended? And if the people have supplied the wants of the preachers in such a plentiful way, ought any individual, or any number of men to represent this, as property belonging to the conference independent of the people? Is it not amazingly strange, that Mr. Mather should venture to mention Mr. Wesley’s debts again, after he and Mr. Pawson had corrected the Minutes, calling what they paid on his account ‘legacies?’ Did not Mr. Wesley always consider the book-stock his own; and did he not dispose of the profits arising from the sale of books as he pleased? Was not that stock at his death, worth, to the Methodist preachers, eight or ten thousand pounds? How could Mr. Wesley die, ‘as it were, insolvent,’ when he left in book-stock five or six thousand pounds more than paid his legacies? Only read his will, and the deed of trust he made afterwards, and you will clearly

clearly perceive, that he claimed the *sole right* of disposing of the books, and all the printing machinery as he thought proper. Is it not astonishingly unjust, to represent this great man dying insolvent, when he so greatly enriched the preachers, by leaving in their hands a large stock of books, with a trade that has cleared at least ten or twelve thousand pounds in the five years since his death? Did I ever publish any thing equal to this, in any of my pamphlets?—And yet this good man and his brethren, circulate through the nation, that I had injured Mr. Wesley's character, and the cause of God. I am bold to aver, however, that Mr. Wesley's character was never half so much injured by any man, as by the late conference, publishing to the world, that they had his debts to pay; and Mr. Mather now coming forward again, and saying, 'he died, as it were, insolvent?'——9. There is something very curious in Mr. Mather's declarations respecting what they are deficient:—'In seventy-one wives, 800l. and odd. In half the allowance for the superannuated and widows, which could not be paid at conference, as it usually has been, viz. 400l. and odd. A sum borrowed from the Kingwood collection (which is intended for the whole of the year) of 500l.——And, if allowed, after so many years, to draw any interest for their money laid out, 400l. These sums amount to 2100l.' Passing by what is said respecting the wives, how can Mr. Mather come forward and say, that only 'half of the allowance could be paid for the superannuated and widows,' when the last conference, according to their own account, received 1249l. 17s. 3d. and only expended 922l. 6s. leaving a balance in their hands of 327l. 11s. 3d. If the superannuated and widows have only received half their allowance, what have the preachers done with the rest? If they have not only disposed of the balance, but half the allowance, are the people to be called upon to send delegates to give the conference security for 400l. part of the sum they mention; that the superannuated and widows have not yet received, when they know in their conscience, that according to the statement of the minutes, their whole allowance was given to the preachers last July, and, that over and above paying their whole allowance, there was a balance of 327l. 11s. 3d. Have the preachers expended 8000l. of their own property, or has this sum been
given

given by the people, to help to carry on the work?—When Mr. Wesley took the surplus of the collection for the preachers' fund to help in defraying the expences of the preachers, it never entered his heart, that his sons in the gospel, would ever claim the money he thus expended as their own property, and publish in the year 1796, that 'all monies borrowed from this fund shall be paid with legal interest.' It appears, that the different sums for many years with the legal interest would be above 8000*l*. But can Mr. Mather, or any of the preachers be so weak as to imagine, that delegates from the people, would give security for the money Mr. Wesley expended in carrying on the work many years before his death; and which he never imagined would be sought for by the preachers after his death?

Could Mr. Wesley return from the dead, and examine the laws the preachers have made since his removal from among them, what would he say to the rules of the preachers' fund? What would he say to many other rules which are a reproach to Methodism? Would he not address his sons in the gospel to this effect?—'My dear children, I laboured sixty years night and day, to spread the gospel of the grace of God, and to enlarge the coast of Methodism. While I was with you, I greatly feared, that power and riches would be your ruin, should they be given to you in the displeasure of the Almighty.—Both these evils, according to my ability, I kept from you, determining not to have any thing to charge my conscience with on your account. In the latter part of my life, when I began to totter beneath my years and excessive labours, I employed several of you to help me from the purest motives. While I did it, a fear rose in my heart lest you should claim any authority over your brethren after my death, on account of your helping me in my distress. A secret dread seized my mind, when I saw you grasping too much after power, and determining to have your own will in certain cases. I saw the steps you took to work on my passions, to prevail on me to sanction your measures, but the infirmities under which I laboured, and a hope that you would not abuse your power, led me to rest in a measure satisfied. But alas! what do I now see? Several of you have been plotting and scheming with all the art you have possessed, to be made bishops, that you might reign

reign as princes in the Israel of God. When your schemes have failed in one shape, you have brought them forward in another. And now you are talking about an 'executive government,' and are grasping after dominion over your brethren, and over the people at large.——What change is this which I see in the rules of the preachers' fund?

'At my death, the real wants of the superannuated and widows, was the rule of disbursement, but now you have made rules which are a reproach to christianity, requiring that superannuated preachers, or the widows of such preachers, shall have pounds a year for life, according to the years of travelling, whether the preachers and widows want them or not. By these rules a man that has no need of help, may claim thirty or forty pounds a year for life; while a worthy person, superannuated by the providence of God, or a widow left by a worthy husband in the bloom of life, may have need of thirty or forty pounds a year for life, and can only claim twelve or fifteen from the fund. These rules, which are extremely unjust, you must support at all events. And therefore, you have resolved, that all the money which I took from that fund to help the other collections, shall be repaid with legal interest. Had I not seen it recorded on the minutes of your late conference, I could not have thought, that you, my dear sons, could have been guilty of such a conduct. Did you imagine that it ever entered into my heart, that you would demand the money back, which I expended in carrying on the work of God?——Do you suppose, that the preachers' fund, supported by laws and rules, which are a reproach to your cause, can act as a golden chain, to bind you together?——Do you not clearly perceive, that you are losing the confidence of the people, and that while you contend for money and power, the sheep are scattered? In short, you have almost doubled your expenditure, as it refers to the yearly contingences, and have made so many laws and rules contrary to the happiness of the people, without consulting them, that I fear your glory is departed, and that God will suffer you to be led by worldly maxims and policy, to your ruin and destruction.——While there is room for the least hope of recovery, fly back to God, and renounce whatever hinders the happiness of the different societies, that the people may be blessed, and

and the cause of true religion flourish on every side.'—

10. Lastly, Does Mr. Mather suppose, that were delegates appointed from among the people; that they would not only give security for the 8000l. he mentions, but 'see that they have the interest annually paid, together with proper security for any further sum they may advance in the same way, &c.?' Are the delegates to be obsequious to the will of the preachers in all things, and to 'give proper security for any farther sum' they may please to expend?—
Would not this be *implicit faith*, and *passive obedience* with a witness?

Upon the whole, the following particulars ought to be attended to by every lover of Methodism:—

1. That the preachers collectively, have more power and influence over the different societies under their care, than any ministers under heaven, except the ministers of the church of Rome. 2. That a small part of the preachers both govern their brethren, and the people, in almost every thing they wish for. 3. That according to the present plan, they must have secret district meetings, and a secret conference, that the people may be kept ignorant of what is transacted. 4. That the contradictory accounts published since the conference are only calculated to create jealousies, and raise suspicion and fear in the hearts of our people. 5. That the steps taken to quiet our friends, are calculated to stir them up to free inquiry: and the more they examine our affairs, the more they are convinced of the necessity of a reform. 6. Matters are gone so far, that unless the preachers speedily come forward, and acknowledge their system is imperfect, and determine to alter it in those parts which are defective, it will be impossible to prevent divisions and confusion in the body. 7. Nothing less than lay-delegates, chosen from among the people, without any influence from the preachers, appointed to attend district meetings and the conference, possessed of equal powers with the preachers, can bring about peace in the body, and prosperity to the work. All the efforts made use of to prevent delegates from having a place in those meetings, are only calculated to raise suspicion, and to prevent the people from being satisfied. 8. If the preachers do act with strict uprightness, what reason have they to fear, should delegates be appointed to attend their meetings?—
If they have any thing acted behind the screen which they
are

are afraid of the people knowing, the sooner it is found out and sacrificed the better. Delegates will not act as 'guards and spies,' but as members of the same body, and as fellow-helpers of the same cause. They will act as guardians for the people, and in every thing seek to promote the happiness of the preachers. In this case, we should live as a city at unity with itself. Then would our spiritual Zion be in great prosperity, and divine peace would rest upon Israel. God grant us such mercy, and to his name shall be ascribed glory and praise for ever!

A. KILHAM.

LIVERPOOL, Nov. 19, 1796.

P. S. Last year I was obliged to shew, that Messrs. Mather and Pawson forgot one of the rules which they had helped to make in the conference, 1795; which positively declared, 'That no pamphlet or printed letter should be circulated, without the author's name being at it, and the postage paid.'——In about a month after it was made, those worthy brethren broke it in the face of the people, by sending printed letters through the nation, without *paying* the postage of them. If Messrs. Mather and Pawson together, in their Affectionate Address, and Mr. Pawson, in his Letter to the Methodists, lately circulated, have not broken a rule of the last conference, I am bold to aver, that Mr. Mather has done it. The rule is as positive as the English language can make it:—'*No preacher shall publish any thing but what is given to the conference, and printed in our own press.*' The book-committee to determine what is proper to be printed.' If the Affectionate Address was sanctioned by the book-committee, and printed in our own press, for the benefit of the conference, was Mr. Pawson's Letter sanctioned the same way? But if both the former came out by the right door, it is certain, Mr. Mather's did not. It is very probable, he did not consult the book-committee respecting his Addenda, and it is certain it was not printed in the press belonging to the conference. If the law were not absolute, we might make some allowance; but as it now stands, Mr. Mather has broken one of the rules of the last conference, by printing his Addenda in Manchester,
if

if he and Mr. Pawson have not broken it in other respects, and the preachers of the Bristol district have all violated the same rule by publishing their minutes. I only mention these things to shew the absurdity of making such rules as are frequently published in our minutes, and broken in a few weeks after, by the persons that made them. May these good men learn to be consistent, that we may not have any cause in future, to reflect on them upon this head!

APPENDIX.

A Few days ago, I was favoured with Mr. Pawson's attack upon the first number of the Monitor.—— When an old man, that has travelled thirty-five years, comes forward to defend the cause of Methodism, we, at least, expect argument, and not invective from his pen. When it is remembered, that Mr. Pawson has for several years, professed himself a partaker of christian perfection, we had a right to hope, that he would not stain his character, by giving way to bitterness and wrath. Perhaps nothing hurts the cause of religion among us so much, as persons making a great profession, and acting contrary to it. When a man stands up in the presence of God, and in the presence of his brethren, to make solemn declarations of his being cleansed from all unrighteousness, and when he returns to his family, discovers tempers and dispositions that are a reproach to christianity, what can his children or servants think of his profession? They read, a good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and are amazed to find, that a person professing high attainments in christian perfection, should be so terribly waspish, and ill-tempered. After making this general observation, I will leave the reader to observe, how far it is applicable to Mr. Pawson, by the quotations I shall make from his Letter.

He

He begins thus :—‘DEAR BRETHREN, Mr. Kilham’s *Monitor* having fallen into my hands, I beg leave to trouble you with the following remarks upon a very small part of it :—

‘This book, I am bold to affirm, abounds with such barefaced and abominable falsehoods, as have not been equalled by any one that ever wrote against the Methodists, in so narrow a compass : and although it is exceedingly painful to me to expose him as one of the grossest SLANDERERS that ever set pen to paper, yet, my duty to God, and my love to my brethren, oblige me to do it.’

This good man signed the London bull last year, which contains the following declaration, upon the Progress of Liberty ;— ‘ So bad a book has not been published among us, since the first revival of the work of God.— We desire you will read this our testimony against the malice, pride, and audaciousness with which the pamphlet under consideration is replete.’——It appears, however, that the first number of the Monitor, which only contains a few pages upon the different subjects that now agitate our body, is considered by Mr. Pawson, to be worse than the Progress of Liberty. Perhaps our worthy friend looked forward, and had a kind of prophetic-view of what the Monitor would contain, and therefore could contain himself no longer. After having assisted to destroy the liberty of the press among the preachers, it must be extremely mortifying to see the *Methodist Monitor* circulating through the nation, bringing to light many things that have been kept secret, and pointing out before all, the necessity of a speedy redress of grievances among the preachers ; if it be designed that Methodism should flourish in future.

This good man appears pained at the heart to expose me, ‘as one of the greatest SLANDERERS that ever set pen to paper, yet his duty to God, and his love to his brethren obliged him to do it.’——Did his duty to God, and love to the brethren, oblige him to call names, and make use of bitter and slanderous expressions, to supply his want of argument ? Did Mr. Pawson suppose that his saying, ‘I am bold to affirm, this book abounds with such barefaced and abominable falsehoods, as have not been equalled by any one, &c.’ would carry conviction to the consciences of all that read this declaration ?

P

He

He quotes the following words from my preface to the Monitor :——

‘ It will give me another opportunity of showing my love to the preachers in general, and the connexion at large.’——And adds, ‘ Let us examine how he discovers his love to the preachers, and I am inclined to think, we shall see that word most astonishingly verified, *The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.* Whatever Mr. Pawson or his friends may declare to the contrary, I am not ashamed to acknowledge, that love to the preachers, and the connexion at large, has been the principle from which I have acted, in what I have written. I have been convinced for several years, that the preachers have been acting upon a system that would ultimately destroy their usefulness, and spread confusion and death through the connexion. According to my ability, I have pointed out the hurt of the daughter of Zion, and at the same time I have pressed upon the preachers to apply an infallible remedy.—— Being expelled from the conference, for what I have published, and reproached and persecuted through the nation, I could not have the same opportunity of showing my love to the preachers and people, as I had when united to them. But rather than retire secretly to mourn over the present state of the connexion, by the advice of a number of respectable friends, I engaged to publish the Monitor, and to visit the places, where Divine Providence should open my way.— Both these services I have entered upon, because, according to my views of the subject, ‘ my duty to God, and my love to the brethren oblige me to them.’ Yet Mr. Pawson comes forward and declares, he thinks that scripture, *The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel*, ‘ is astonishingly fulfilled’ in my conduct. Let the people judge, whether love to the preachers and connexion, or wicked cruelty influence my conduct.

Mr. Pawson says, ‘ In page 17, he gives us an extract from a manuscript, the author’s name, he says, he is not at liberty to mention. I know the author well, and have read the manuscript some time since ; but it is a doubt with me whether he had any authority to publish it, as the author informed me, he wrote it at a time when his mind was exceedingly irritated, by the ill usage he thought he had met with. But if the writer of that manuscript was no better informed, why does Mr. K—— try to make the world believe (page 18.) that from the year 1784, Mr. Wesley’s power

power in governing the connexion was little more than nominal? When he cannot but know, that till the last conference which Mr. Wesley attended, in 1790, he exercised his power in as full and complete a manner, as he ever did at any time whatever.'

I can assure Mr. Pawson and all my readers, that I had full liberty to publish the manuscript, under certain restrictions, which I religiously observed. The author did not only think he was ill used, but was assured that the treatment he met with, was contrary to the gospel of Christ. And he is far from being convinced, that this manuscript contains any thing in it too strong, or too severe, unless he is much changed in his views since he favoured me with the manuscript.

But is it not 'beyond measure astonishing,' that Mr. Pawson should declare, he knows the author, and has seen the manuscript, and yet he abuses and reproaches me for the different sentiments it contains. If Mr. Pawson had been ignorant of the author, and had been persuaded it was my own work, he might have written with some degree of decency, against the parts he objects to.—But no person can justify his attacking me in the manner he has done, either by reason, or the word of God. Mr. Pawson is one of the book committee, to examine what shall be inserted in the magazine. Suppose he and his brethren agree to publish different pieces, which they have received from respectable friends; should they inform their readers at the head of every piece, that they have received it from their friends to publish, would it be generous in me, or in any other person, to call the book-committee liars, slanderers, &c. because a few things are not agreeable to our sentiments? And would it not be a thousand times more absurd, if we professed we knew the authors of the pieces we attacked, and had an opportunity of seeing them every day.—Yet this is exactly the conduct of Mr. Pawson to me. If the author of that manuscript were to come forward in defence of his own sentiments, he could confirm them by argument and fact. I shall at present make a few observations upon different parts of the letter, hoping they will cast some light upon the subject.

The first thing Mr. Pawson attacks, is the sentiment the author maintained, respecting Mr. Wesley's power.—He considers it as little more than nominal, from the year

1784. Mr. Pawson declares, 'He exercised his power in as full and complete a manner till 1790, as he ever did at any time whatever.' Mr. Pawson should not forget, however, that Mr. Wesley had a few leading preachers that acted as a privy council, who formed schemes, and proposed measures to him, which he brought forward in the conference, and carried. It is well known that Mr. Wesley was greatly influenced by this select few, and that in very many instances, his power was little more than nominal.

Mr. Pawson says, 'Is it not beyond measure astonishing, that he should represent the Manchester Conference as destroying all the addresses sent to them by the people, without perusing them; when he knows as well as I do, that those addresses were only *for* and *against* the sacrament, &c.'—It is rather singular, that this good man should positively declare, 'we knew what was in them,' when he owns they were destroyed without being perused! By what means did the conference come at this knowledge, as they never were perused?—I can assure Mr. Pawson, that addresses were destroyed, which contained many things besides the sacrament. And if he and his brethren continue to deny it, I will in a future number of the Monitor, endeavour to bring matters of fact to confirm what I now declare.—I hope Mr. Pawson has not forgotten that petitions were destroyed also at the London Conference in 1792.

The author of the manuscript says, 'that he does not know whether the members of the conference oblige themselves by *oath* or by solemn promise not to reveal what passes among them.' Mr. Pawson immediately falls upon me with vengeance, as though these words were my own, and says,—'Does A. K—— mean to proceed in this way, and lie for lying's sake, and so put it into the power of every one who ever attended a conference to contradict him. One would suppose that A. K—— is under an engagement to publish all the lies and idle tales that any one will be wicked enough to send him. I advise him therefore to take for his motto in the next number of his Monitor, the following words of Jeremiah xx. 10. 'For I have heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report. 'Only let him alter the words thus:—*Report, I say, and I will report*

it. Only invent lies, and I will publish them.'——After our worthy friend had thus eased his heart, he adds,——'I have attended thirty-five conferences, and I solemnly declare, that I never in my life knew an oath taken, or proposed to be taken by any one. Nor has any promise of secrecy been required, except with regard to stationing the preachers, till a proper time; or when a doubtful character has been spoken of, the person not being present.'——When all the preachers stand up, and solemnly promise in the presence of God, that they will not reveal what passes, ought not this to be as binding as an oath? I would ask Mr. Pawson, if there was not a rule made in the conference (whether it is published or not I am not able to determine, as I have not the minutes with me) that if any preacher, in full connexion, reveal the secrets of the conference, he should be put back on trial; and if any preacher, on trial, revealed the secrets of that assembly, he should be dismissed? Will Mr. Pawson deny that such a rule was made? If he will but recollect what passed in the Manchester Conferences in 1791, and 1795, as well as in the Bristol Conference in 1794, he will know that secrecy was enjoined upon the preachers, respecting what passed in the conference, on account of Mr. Wesley's executors, and the delegates that attended the other conference alluded to.—And though I was present in the chapel-yard, yet they bound themselves by solemn promise, not to reveal to me, or any of my friends, what passed in the five hours they were summing up the evidence against me.

If these things are put together, the reader will be able to judge how far Mr. Pawson had a right to declare 'that no promise of secrecy is required,' but in the particulars he mentions. And at the same time it will be manifest, how far Mr. Pawson acts like a man of candor, when he knows I am not the author of the piece he is angry with, and yet concludes the paragraph in these words: 'I would ask any one of his admirers, what degree of credit they suppose, a man of candor can give to any thing he says, after having published such known, wilful falsehoods as this to the world!!!'

If this good man means by this attack upon the passions of his readers, to injure my character, he will find, that his notes of admiration, and all the art he can use,

will not prejudice the sensible and pious, to think as he does.

The author of the manuscript declares, 'That the conference has the absolute disposal of all monies collected for various purposes.' Mr. Pawson again loses his temper, and considers the words as my own : he says, 'The disposal of all monies !—Has Mr. K.—lost every degree of shame ? Do not all the stewards through the connection know, that this is as barefaced a falsehood as ever proceeded from the tongue or pen of any man who ever spoke or wrote since the world began ! Can he believe that the conference has the disposal of one tenth, or even one twentieth of the money collected in our societies ? I believe not.' Perhaps the author of the manuscript only alluded to the public collections, which the preachers claim a right to dispose of, without any interference from the people. Or if he meant the words to be understood in their grammatical meaning, if they are not exactly correct, are they not nearly so ?—Do not the preachers fix their own quarterage, wives and children allowance, servants wages, and almost every thing that belongs to furniture, &c. in their houses ? Do they not claim a right to suffer no chapel to be built but by their appointment, and for their use ? Have they not the direction and interference in the dwelling houses which are built : Do they not fix their own board, or get it fixed to their mind, and expend what they please in coal and candle, in doctor bills, in buying and changing horses, &c. Nay, in most places have they not their own will in disbursing the money that is collected for the poor, whether in the congregation, at a love feast, or by the sacrament ? If the stewards and leaders will consider the influence the preachers have in the particulars just named, perhaps they will be constrained to acknowledge, that so far from Mr. Pawson's declaration being true, they themselves have not 'the disposal of one tenth, or even one twentieth part of the money collected in the society.'

He goes on, charging me with what the author has written in these words :—

'Is it possible for any one to give a more unjust representation of the district committees than he has done in page 24, 25 ? And can any one that reads the articles of pacification, believe one word that he says ?' When the author wrote the manuscript, the rules of pacification did

did not exist. And since they were made in the year 1795, the preachers would not suffer them to operate in my case. Nor do I know that they have operated in a single instance since they were first made. The author says, page 25 :— ‘ That the preacher or preachers may be the aggressors in any difference, and have done the injury complained of, and yet be members of the committee ; they are allowed to represent their own case in any way they please; without being confronted by the opposite party, and to sit as judges in their own cause, while the injured person, or persons, are wholly excluded.’

Without attempting to enter into the merits of a recent cause lately settled in Bristol, was not this plan exactly pursued ? Though Mr. Bradford was the person accused, for acting contrary to the rules of the conference, yet he was not only allowed to represent his own cause, but was made chairman of the meeting, and of course he was *most honourably acquitted*. What does it avail having rules of pacification, when the preachers can set them aside when they please ?

The author of the manuscript complains, that the Manchester Conference, held in 1791, set aside Mr. Wesley's will, and the deed of trust also, in requiring the preachers that were appointed to supply the new chapel, City-road, and the chapel in Bath, to resign their power, that the conference might have all power in its own hands. Mr. Pawson does not attempt to deny the charge, but reasons upon the expediency of the measure. The author, in mentioning the circumstance said, ‘ But nothing was sacred in the eyes of the Manchester Conference that stood in the way of their own aggrandizement.’ Mr. Pawson is quite at a loss to know what is meant by this word. He then tells us the years he has travelled, and declares, ‘ I cannot conceive that I, or any one else, are in an higher station, or in easier or happier circumstances now, than we were before Mr. Wesley's death.’ It is certain, however, that many superannuated preachers and widows, have a great deal more allowance than they had during Mr. Wesley's life. In this respect they are ‘ easier and happier.’ If several worthy fathers have not become more elevated above their brethren than they are now, it has not been their fault.—They have sought diligently to be made bishops, or executive heads, or governors over the people in any form, but
hitherto

hitherto they have fought in vain. Mr. Pawson complains of having more work, and of this being considerably increased by my conduct. If I have pointed out a number of things in our constitution, that are contrary to the scriptures, and this good man, with several of his brethren, have had a great deal of work in devising and executing my expulsion: if they have wrought night and day to keep the societies from free inquiry, lest they should join with us in seeking a redress of real grievances, it must be acknowledged, that this has been attended with a good deal of care and labour. And when all the efforts used have a contrary effect from what was intended, it must be truly mortifying.

Mr. Pawson ironically says, 'It must be acknowledged, to his praise, that A. K—— as steadily follows the good old maxim as any one who has gone before him, viz. *Throw dirt enough, and some of it will stick.*' And yet this good man seems entirely ignorant, that this letter of his contains more *Billingsgate scurrilous language*, than any piece of the size that has been circulated by any Methodist preacher for a number of years. Even in the paragraph where this passage stands, he says, 'I take the liberty to tell him yet farther, that he is as vile an accuser of the brethren as ever appeared since I can remember.' When this good man 'speaks of throwing dirt,' might we not say,—
'Physician heal thyself.'

Mr. Pawson takes great pains to make it appear, that there is no injustice manifest, in assistant preachers having the profits of the books sold in their respective circuits.—If Mr. Pawson has given the whole of the profits to his colleague, on a certain occasion, or others have bestowed a few shillings upon a colleague, I can assure him, that there are a great number of the assistants that make the young preachers carry out the books for them, and do not afford them any thing worth naming for their trouble.—I could name a person who travelled with an assistant of this character, that got about ten pounds by selling books in one year, but he would not give his colleague a single halfpenny, for the trouble he had been at in carrying them out to all parts of the circuit. He even made him pay three shillings for a book, which only cost him two shillings and nine-pence. I can assure Mr. Pawson, that my colleagues have been satisfied on this head, since I acted as an
assistant.

assistant. I have not 'cruelly treated my brethren' upon this matter. Is the whole of what Mr. Pawson says on this subject, any thing else but an attack upon the passions of the people? Speaking about a person gaining ten pounds a year, saving 200l. in twenty years, leaving his children 40l. each, may operate as dust to the eyes: But let Mr. Pawson, or any other person, come forward and declare, that when two preachers, in equal circumstances, are travelling together, it is right that the assistant preacher should have the disposal of all the profits of the books they both sell, and though the other preacher has been more employed in carrying them to different parts of the circuit, yet he shall have any thing or nothing, just as his assistant pleases.

If Mr. Pawson could hear the complaints of very many travelling preachers on this head, he, perhaps, would see into the injustice of one man in a circuit having all the profits of the books, and should he bestow a few shillings on his colleagues, it is not of necessity, but of choice.——Could a person wrong his brethren this way of their share of the profits, and lay up the sum Mr. Pawson mentions, what consolation would he have, when his conscience informs him, that he has done to his colleagues as he would not wish to be done by?——And whether Mr. Pawson will believe it or not, I can assure him, that the sale of books is considerably cramped by this measure.—If it were enacted, that the preachers shall share in the profits of the books according to their circumstances, those that now complain would be satisfied, and every preacher would exert himself in extending the sale as much as possible.

This worthy friend declares, 'It is but too evident, that A. K——'s grand design is to make the preachers appear as contemptible as he possibly can; but it is matter of thankfulness, that many of them have nothing to fear from any thing he can say or do; they are too well known by the people, to suffer any thing from his pen, however deep he may dip it in the gall of bitterness.'

I can assure Mr. Pawson, and the world at large, that this is a very unjust reflection.——I have no desire

fire 'to make the preachers appear as contemptible as possible.'—If the body of preachers will suffer themselves to be governed by a few persons, whose object is to form a bishop-plan, or an executive head, and tamely submit to their measures, their conduct may be represented in its own light by us, and should they resolve to let *the few* govern them in future, their abject submission may create contempt in the minds of the people.—They have it in their power, either to make themselves respectable, or contemptible.

If they join what Mr. Hall calls the decemvirate, and violently oppose the liberties of the people, using every effort in their power to keep delegates out of district meetings and the conference, their present jealousies will be confirmed, and they cannot have the good opinion of them which they have formerly had.—On the other hand, if they resolve to be no longer governed and controlled by *the few*, but generously come forward to *seek* and *claim* the liberties of the people, they will become respectable by all, who dare think for themselves.

I do not mean to dip my pen 'in the gall of bitterness,' to make them fear or suffer, but, if possible, to awaken their attention to their state and danger, that their future usefulness may exceed every thing that has yet been manifest.

Mr. Pawson concludes by saying, 'But it would be endless to take notice of all the falsehoods which A. K.—— has published, and therefore I leave it to those who have more time upon their hands than I have at present.'

If what I have written contains so many falsehoods, what is the reason this good man will not spare time to expose them?——It is abundantly easier to call what I have written by this name, than to prove the assertion.—There is too much truth in the pieces I have published.—Had they contained what he calls 'barefaced lies,' the preachers *that manage our affairs* would have considered them of little consequence.—But when the truth came with too much evidence before the people, the system was in danger, and it was necessary to take the steps which have been regularly

larly pursued by the priest - hood, ever since the days of Constantine, to crush me, and to support the system.

If Mr. Pawson comes forward again to attack me or my brethren, I hope he will remember, that he has long professed christian perfection, and that giving way to wrath and bitterness, only tend to make the truth of his profession suspected. But if meekness, gentleness, brotherly kindness, and charity influence his future publications, his readers may be edified, and the truth prevail.

May the Living Jehovah, give us much of his Mind and Spirit, that we may glorify him on earth, and find our way to eternal happiness, in that kingdom which cannot be moved!

A. KILHAM.

LIVERPOOL, Nov. 23, 1796.

REMARKS

R E M A R K S

On a Pamphlet, entitled, 'A Defence of the Conduct of the Conference, in the Expulsion of Alexander Kilham,' by Messrs. Mather, Pawson, and Benson.

“ And after five days Ananias, the high-priest, descended with the elders, and with a certain orator, named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul. And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying—We have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ring-leader of the sect called Nazarenes; who had also gone about to profane the temple, whom we took, and would have judged according to our law, but the chief captain Lyfias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come unto thee, by examining of whom, thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse him.—Then Paul answered, they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogue, nor in the city: Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.” Acts xxiv. 1, &c.

WHEN Mr. Benson answered Messrs. Tatham and Russel, he met their arguments fairly, and confuted his opponents by the infallible word of God. He endeavoured to guard his pen against abusive language, and his answers do honour to the Methodist connexion.—Mr. Russel stooped to language degrading to the clerical order, but Mr. Benson, though very keen, and in some places satirical, did not debase his cause with epithets reproachful to christianity. Happy would it have been for him and his brethren, had they carefully avoided the appearance of evil, in their late publications. Perhaps nothing has

hurt

hurt their cause so much, as the spirit which they discover in their writings. It would be very easy to imitate their example, and to give place to *scurrilous language*, fitter for Billingsgate than for a minister of Jesus Christ. I hope, by the grace of God, to avoid every thing that would justly offend the most pious and sincere in the religion of Jesus.

The first part of the pamphlet is introductory:—it is an attack upon the passions of the people. It will be noticed in the following pages. There are two things which the reader will be kind enough to keep in view.

1. That the preachers who attack us, studiously keep out of sight the principal subjects of dispute.

2. They raise an host of *imaginary* foes, which they represent in a most formidable manner, and attack with all their might.

1. The following subjects are the chief object of our complaint: and which we earnestly desire may be speedily altered, for the glory of God, and the good of his cause.

1. An assistant preacher, with the help of a leader, can receive members to, or exclude them from the society, without the knowledge or consent of the people. There is no positive law to the contrary. And all the arguments Mr. Benson, or any of his friends have brought forward on this head, do not in the least invalidate this assertion. Because saying, 'It is our custom, or our rule' to consult, is nothing. There is no law to bind any assistant preacher to do it.—Many preachers act contrary to what is called 'general custom,' in receiving members to, or excluding them from the society, and are accountable to none but the conference for their conduct.

2. An assistant preacher can, of his own will, appoint or remove leaders, and town and circuit stewards, without the knowledge or consent of the people. There is no law that requires him to consult a leaders' meeting, and act in conjunction with the brethren, in this business. What is general custom or rule, if it is not binding?—Where is there a circuit, which could not produce facts, that assistant preachers have appointed to, or removed from their office, leaders, and town and circuit stewards, often against the consent of the people, and to their grief and sorrow.

3. An assistant preacher, before the last conference, could appoint local preachers, give them plans, and send them to different places, without asking any person in the

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circuit

circuit a question on the subject. This has been done in a number of places, to the grief of thousands. A new rule was made last August on this head, which is calculated to be of service to the connexion.

4. When I wrote the Progress of Liberty, an assistant preacher could recommend different persons to travel, and get them appointed to circuits, without either consulting individuals, or leaders' or quarterly meetings. And the alteration that has taken place on this head, at the last conference only requires, that those who come out to travel, should be mentioned in leaders' and quarterly meetings.—The preachers reserve the power of *approving* and *appointing* to the district meetings and the conference, where none are present but themselves.

5. When persons are brought out on trial to travel, the preachers can admit them into full connexion, without asking the people a question on the subject. They can do this when the persons on trial are far from being acceptable to the circuits where they have laboured. Has not this been done in a number of instances, since the death of Mr. Wesley?

6. Assistant preachers, with their colleagues, can receive the money collected quarterly, the yearly, Kingswood-school, and the preachers' fund collections, in a vast number of places, without the people knowing what is received, and whether the money be paid in or not, that they know is received. This is particularly the case with the preachers' fund collection. All the regulations on this head do not require, that a preacher should be constrained to receive those collections from the hands of stewards, or other respectable persons, after they have been properly entered into the books belonging to the different societies. If the preacher be required to leave an account of the gross sums he has received from the different societies, for the yearly collection, Kingswood-school, and preachers' fund, upon the plan he gives to his successor, or in the circuit-book, he is by no means required to bring notes from the different places where the collections were made, to witness that the accounts are exact.

7. The preachers of a district can meet together when they please, and consider subjects of the greatest importance to the different societies, and not admit a single person to be present from the people. This is done every year.—
Persons

Persons that place implicit confidence in man may be satisfied ; but sensible, thinking men, consider this as contrary to the interests of the people.

8. Once a year, preachers from every part of the connexion meet together, without the people being allowed to have a single representative among them. They examine each others character.—They divide circuits as they please—They receive members to, or expel them from their body—They disburse the collections according to the counsel of their own will—They abrogate, alter, or make laws, binding upon the societies every where, without consulting them—They appoint each other to supply the circuits for the next year—They either publish or not the different accounts of the collections—And since they detailed them, they have published contradictory accounts, calculated to bewilder the reader. All the affairs of conference are managed solely by the preachers. The people are not allowed to have a single voice or a representative in that assembly.——This system is the object of my attack in the pieces which I have published. Others have exposed it in strong terms. In my pamphlets, I illustrated the different things objected against, by facts, manifested in the conduct of several preachers. If I had not done this many persons would have declared, that though the system cannot be justified, the conduct of the preachers has never been found to militate against the rules laid down by Jesus Christ and his apostles. Men may act contrary to the gospel, upon the best systems ; but where a plan is established, that places *strong temptation* in the way, it is easy to be entangled and brought into bondage. These brethren ask, ‘ Is christianity to be blamed for the faults of its professors ? And is the Methodist system wrong, because a *few rare* instances have occurred, of persons who avowed an attachment to it, and yet became wicked, and cast off the restraints of it ? ’

If christianity proposed a system of rules similar to the above, which are the object of our attack, and ministers acted contrary to the interests of the people under it, would not some of the blame rest upon the system ? But if Methodism and christianity differ in the points we controvert, we may seek to have good rules established, without taking any steps to overthrow the christian religion.

Now, I appeal to Mr. Benson and his friends, whether or not they acted with candour, when they purposely avoided meeting the subject? Have they in any part of this pamphlet, or in any other, attempted to prove, that no such system exists among us? They are conscious, that were they to meet the subject fairly, it would be impossible to justify the measures we oppose, either by *scripture or fair reasoning*.

2. They raise an host of imaginary foes, which they represent in a most formidable manner, and attack with all their might. They represent me as wishing to alter the doctrines—change the whole system—introduce Mr. Paine's plan of politics—destroy the work of God—and ruin the souls of the people. They declare, 'I have searched the connexion from one end of the land to the other, sparing neither age nor station,' to find out crimes to 'bespatter and blacken the whole body.' That I have not been averse 'to *open and rake up* these sinks, and that repeatedly, and to the *very bottom*, that from thence I might get dirt to throw at my fathers and brethren, and even at the memory of him who, under God, was the father of us all.'

I am represented as imposing on the people—dissembling with the trustees—flattering the young preachers—treating the old preachers with sovereign contempt—striving to raise a party, &c. &c. &c.——These imaginary foes are the objects which they pursue with all their might, and endeavour to destroy.

Let any candid reader, carefully examine the different pamphlets which I have published, and he will be convinced, that these things cannot be fairly deduced from any thing in them. But if these worthy brethren had not raised this host, they would have had nothing to attack, but *the principles we have laid down*; and being conscious they could not be overthrown, the eyes of the people would have been opened at once, and they would have seen into the merits of the cause, without any difficulty. But now a mist is raised on every side, subjects extraneous are brought forward, to bewilder the minds of the intelligent, and arguments made use of, to keep those that are ignorant, from so much as attempting to examine the subjects in dispute, *lest their souls should be hurt*. But many are awakening from the stupor that has been so long upon them, and are determined to examine these matters themselves, and

and not to be imposed upon by any arguments that are made use of by any persons who oppose their interests.

Having made these remarks, let us come to the professed design of this pamphlet; that is, a Defence of the Conference in my expulsion.

1. They justify their conduct by alluding to the time I was admitted into full connexion, and receiving the minutes from Mr. Wesley's hand:—and to my agreeing at the Manchester Conference, 1791, 'to follow strictly the plan Mr. Wesley left us at his death.' I would ask these brethren, wherein I have acted contrary to the large minutes since I first entered into the connexion? It is true, one place requires that we should not 'mend, but keep' the rules the minutes contain. But do the minutes require, that should any person suppose he saw some things that might be mended, he is not to propose any amendments to the people? Have I done any thing farther, than point out wherein I think our plan is defective, and proposed several things which appear necessary to be adopted for our future welfare? Have I in any circuit altered the laws of Methodism?—Did I 'cease to walk by those rules' in any place where I was called to labour?—Did I ever attempt 'to alter the *first* and *fundamental* principles of our union?'

But if, when I received the minutes from Mr. Wesley, I had not sufficiently examined them: or if afterwards, by reading and meditation, my mind was led to compare our system with the scriptures, and with the forms of church government established in different places; and if this led me to see a number of things in our system contrary to the scriptures, and to the interests of the people, was it a crime in me to point out those evils, and to propose amendments?—Or would it have been right to have sat down with them, because I had taken the minutes from Mr. Wesley, and proposed to walk by them, before I had sufficiently examined their import? According to this mode of reasoning, St. Paul ought to have continued a Pharisee of the Pharisees—Martin Luther a member of the church of Rome—Mr. Wesley a strict churchman, in every point, &c. without attempting to point out any amendments.

2. They endeavour to persuade their readers, that 'he (A. K.) stood up before God in a religious and solemn meetings,

in the presence of 150 witnesses, all ministers of Christ, and declares his belief and attachment to certain rules and doctrines, which they and he are agreed to walk by, and then when questioned about what he has published contrary thereto, comes gravely forward and says, 'he only meant that he assented to them, as far as he thought them agreeable to scripture.' What egregious trifling is this?—The reader will be kind enough to notice the following remarks:—

1. I gave them in writing my sentiments upon this subject, previous to their trying me this way. And in the paper they received, I expressly declared, that I would conform to all the laws and rules of the conference, as far as they agree with the scriptures. This paper is published in my trial. I saw the snare they were laying, and determined to avoid it, if possible. They first proposed, that all who agreed, 'to follow strictly the plan Mr. Wesley left us at his death would stand up.' I stood up among the rest. Several of them appeared amazed, and declared, I had renounced the sentiments published in my pamphlets. I told them I had not, for Mr. Wesley declared, he had no fixed plan. His plan was to follow the openings of divine providence. And I have shown, in the pamphlets, signed Paul and Silas, that he frequently altered his plan, and acted as the nature of things required. When this scheme failed, they proposed the minutes of the conference, as what they meant to abide by. But Mr. Bradford informed us, it was not supposed that every little thing in the minutes could be binding; or words to this effect. Mr. Bradburn said to me, 'Bless your heart, no person considers all that the minutes contain as binding, it is their general design we have in view;' or words to this effect.—When the preachers stood up to the minutes, I was one among the number that agreed to them in the general view. But Mr. Thompson endeavoured to show, that by standing up I had renounced every thing the pamphlets contained, which militated against the minutes. And when I declared, that the paper I had given them contained my sentiments [that is, that I would be conformed to the rules and laws of Methodism, as far as they are according to the scriptures] and that I would not recede from my written declaration, Mr. Benson objected, and wanted me to agree to the minutes without any qualification at all.—

It

It was then I quoted his own words, in the title page of the first number of the Monitor, which seemed to confuse him. And it was not him, but Mr. Bradburn, that smiled, and sat down. Hear Mr. Benson's reasoning upon this subject : ' Has Mr. B——— published, or written, or intimated, any where, that he, or any man is to *subscribe*, or declare his *assent* to, or *approbation* of, or determination to abide by any creeds, confessions of faith, or articles of religion, or rules whatsoever, whether of doctrine or discipline, which he does not previously believe, and judge to be consistent with the scriptures ? Pray what has he or any one to do to join himself to, or continue among a people whose *doctrine and discipline* he does not believe to be consistent with the scriptures ?'

Pray what has all this to do with my declaring, That I would agree to the minutes as far as they are agreeable to the scriptures ? Does Mr. Benson, or his brethren believe, that the minutes and rules are in every thing agreeable to the scriptures ?——Do the scriptures require, that no man shall taste spirituous liquors except they are prescribed by a physician ?——That a man shall not touch tobacco or snuff.—That no preacher shall sup from his lodging, or be out later than nine o'clock ?——That no chapel shall be built in the octagon form, &c. &c. ?—And are not these minutes of the conference ?

I appeal to the reader's conscience, whether my conduct, in declaring I would agree to the minutes so far as they are agreeable to the scriptures, was a reproach to my character or not ? Would it not have been base in me to have declared, I believed them scriptural, and would conform exactly to them, when I knew in many things they require, what the bible does not enjoin ; and when I was conscious, that many of the rules are only laughed at by some of the preachers, because of their peculiarity, and renounced in practice by all ?—Yet these worthy brethren consider me as ignorant and impertinent——an egregious trifler—as acting on a principle of mental reservation, which had the martyrs stooped to, they might have been saved—I am considered as guilty of ' meanness and prevarication—giving my *assent* and *attachment* to what I *disapproved of in my heart*—as wanting in *integrity and courage* to avow my sentiments—as a slippery Proteus, that no tie could hold.'

This

This is their rhetoric. Had I refused to declare my sentiments openly before them all, then such expressions would have had some meaning in them. But when I avowed my principles on the spot, in their presence, without the least disguise, their using language of this nature, is an attack upon the passions, and not upon the understanding. Nay, the expressions themselves, are beneath the dignity of those that signed the pamphlet.

3. They say, 'another thing that sunk him prodigiously in the esteem of his brethren, was his being unable to make good *any one of the charges* he had brought and published to the world, against divers of the preachers, although he had pledged himself to prove them before the conference.'——In my account of the trial, I purposely avoided publishing any thing but the particulars that were brought before the preachers, at the time of my examination. And the people in general, who read the account, supposed the charges sufficiently authenticated. When the conference published a letter through the nation, in which they held out the same declaration, many of the friends in London, and a vast number in other places, were amazed at this positive assertion. They said, if I could not prove them, only let the conference come to us, and we will do it at once. Were it necessary, there are thousands that could prove every charge, from what they have seen and heard. If I 'sunk prodigiously' in the opinion of the preachers on this head, the people, that determined to think for themselves, were of a different opinion.

They consider every charge sufficiently proved, and are astonished that Mr. Benson should bring forward the same declaration. After several assertions about the falseness of my charges, as usual, the passions of the people are again attacked. They draw conclusions from premises of their own, and ask, 'what compensation can this man make to the persons he has aspersed?—to their friends and relations?—to the whole body of preachers and people, of which they were members?—or to the church of God in general? &c. &c.'

What have questions of this nature to do with the subject? Have I aspersed the characters of any of the preachers, or related facts which are self-evident?——Do these
brethren

brethren think of working upon the passions of the people, to blind their understanding?—Was there any sin in my smiling, when 150 preachers disputed for an hour, to know whether I was trying them, or they were trying me?—Do they think of terrifying me and my friends by threatenings of eternal judgment, unless ‘deep repentance’ take place, before we are convinced of our sin?—If Mr. Benson wept when he saw the preachers determined to force the trustees into a law-suit, might he not have wept with equal propriety, when he saw them resolved to cut off one of their body, for telling them the truth?—If several of the preachers have wept over my ‘indiscretion and obstinacy,’ ought they not also to have wept over their own conduct, in determining to withhold the privileges of the people from them?—Have I ‘pulled down God’s temple,’ or are the preachers, by resolving to retain undue power and influence over the people, likely to accomplish this evil?—If my plan be only a ‘sorry, clumsy superstructure of wood, hay, and stubble,’ why should the preachers be so very much alarmed?—Will not the truth burn up the ‘sorry, clumsy wood, hay, and stubble’ I have built, if they properly apply it?—But if many of their own rules and laws of discipline are of this nature, it is their wisdom to keep the fire of truth as much from them as possible, lest they should be consumed?—We have reason to bless God, ‘that the reign of popery is so far over and gone’ with us, that their ‘enquiries do not trouble me, nor any whose minds are full of new schemes of liberty, &c.’—Nothing can affect us but unadulterated truth.—Light to the understanding, and conviction to the conscience.—An appeal to our passions does not create any sorrow in our heart.

Mr. Benson quotes the Greek to show what an heretic is, Titus iii. 10.—A sect or party man. He brings forward Romans xvi. 17. to show, that scripture itself required my expulsion.—They say, ‘If the conference had acted according to the plain letter of the scripture, they would have rejected him at the London conference, four years ago, for the disputes and contentions he had excited at Newcastle-upon-Tyne the year

year before, and his * inflammatory pamphlet that year.' At the London conference, four years ago, Mr. Benson declared, Messrs. Thomas Taylor and Bradburn had written worse pamphlets than mine, on the same subject, and he was amazed at the partiality of the preachers in suffering them to be passed over without a trial, when they had been so very severe upon me.

If the preachers sinned against God at that time, in refusing to act 'according to the plain letter of the scriptures,' by showing mercy to me, did they not act contrary to the bible, in refusing to try those who were equally guilty, and in permitting them to continue in connexion, *Mr. Benson himself being judge?*——But these brethren should not lay to my account 'the disputes and contentions excited at Newcastle.' They were begun long before I saw that place. And the division of that society, was occasioned by Mr. Cownley's giving the sacrament at Byker, before I wrote a line upon the subject. They should also recollect, that I was not 'sent to Scotland' as a punishment for what I had done, but offered voluntarily to go, when other preachers refused, if they would only allow me to stay at Newcastle till my wife should recover from child-bearing, and be able to bear the fatigues of such a long journey.

4. The next 'ground on which we defend the conduct of his expulsion, is, the false charges brought against divers of the preachers, and repeatedly published to the world, and the indecent and slanderous language he has made use of on this head.' It is asked, 'did he not acknowledge his fault, and promise amendment?' They own

* Mr. Pawson, who signed this pamphlet, received fifty of those I published in Newcastle. He spoke highly of, and spread them among his friends. I received a very kind letter from him on the occasion. Had I been at Leeds, an extract should have been inserted here.——In that letter, he speaks in warm terms of the reception my pamphlet met with at the district meeting. At that time we were only contending about the branches; the root was left untouched; that is, the undue power and influence of the leading preachers. Since their power has been exposed, as too great to be possessed by *any ministers*, those that were my warmest friends, are now my most violent opposers. There is nothing new in this. It is according to the conduct of the clergy in all ages, since the days of Constantine.

I did confess 'in some degree; but what are these faint and minced confessions, when compared with the greatness of his guilt? &c.' 'And as to promises of amendment, he neither made any, that we recollect, or gave us any reason to suppose, that in this particular he would amend. Had we expected any such thing, his conduct since that period has demonstrated we should have been disappointed; for his last pamphlet abounds with fresh instances of falsehood and misrepresentation.'

In the conference I repeatedly declared, if they could convince me by argument and scripture, that I had acted contrary to the gospel of Christ, I would cheerfully confess my offence, in the new chapel, before the congregation, should they require it: but at the same time they were informed, that nothing less than a conviction of guilt, could excite a sincere confession from me. As far as I was convinced of any error, it was willingly acknowledged.— And however these worthy brethren may call it a 'faint and minced confession,' there is a God that will judge righteously on this subject, and in due time will convince my opposers, that my acknowledgments were sincere.— Had I '*slandered and vilified* a whole body of preachers,' my guilt would have been great indeed: and my confession ought to have kept pace with it. But I have not '*slandered and vilified*' the body of the Methodist preachers, neither directly, nor indirectly. And I cannot think that these brethren have avoided the crime they charge upon me, in torturing what I have written in some places, to contradict plain declarations in other parts of the pamphlets. If they should be found by the impartial, to be guilty of *slandering and vilifying* me, in the very place where they charge me with these evils, perhaps they will say, 'worthy physicians, heal yourselves!'

Under the same head, they bring forward a passage from my account of the conference trial, to make me appear odious before all. In the minutes of the conference, they added up what they had received from the yearly collection, and made it near a thousand pounds more than the different sums amounted to. I did not think that 150 preachers would have made such a mistake in addition. It never entered my mind to spend half an hour in adding up the different columns to find out the mistake.

I did

I did not know that the account was wrong, till I received a letter from Nottingham in Sunderland, several weeks after I had published my account of the trial. In the trial, supposing their account to be just, I say, 'This is a great mystery! when it is known that many circuits gave less this year than formerly.' Was it not natural to declare, it was a mystery, how the collection should increase near a thousand pounds, when it was known that many circuits had not given so much as usual?

They fall foul upon me, however, at once, and say,—'Oh! Brethren, this is vile! This is diabolical indeed! This is pure malice!' But after this christian language, these worthy brethren draw a number of inferences, and charge me with a want of 'the charity that hopeth all things!' It appears, that these fathers in the gospel, under the influence of the 'charity that hopeth all things,' could cry out (upon my saying it was a mystery to me, and others, how the yearly collection should be near a thousand pounds more than usual) 'this is vile! this is diabolical!' judge, whether their charity hopeth better things of me, than mine hopes of them?

In this passage they charge me, under the influence of the 'charity that hopeth all things,' with having this end in view, 'by every possible means to excite suspicion and jealousy in the minds of the people against their teachers.—With this only view he asks, 'Why are not the other collections detailed the same way?' Why! undoubtedly, that the preachers might have an opportunity of pocketing part of the money without discovery! Oh brethren!—but we spare him. God be merciful to him! For if detraction, slander, and false accusation be sins, he is a sinner indeed!

All this wickedness of mine took its rise from their adding up the yearly collection wrong, and my declaring it was a mystery that it should be so much more this year than usual. After these worthy fathers have scourged me handsomely, with a few hard words, it seems that their 'charity that hopeth all things' operated a little tenderly towards me. This is discovered in two things. 1. 'Oh brethren!—but we spare him.' It is a great act of charity not to punish according to the nature of the offence. 2. 'God be merciful to him.' To have an interest
in

in the prayers of good men, is a great blessing.——
I return my sincere thanks to my opponents, for their sparing mercy, and for their pathetic prayers on my account. May the Lord hear, and deliver!

After struggling a little for a reason why they did not detail the other collections, they inform us, 'It is because the conference thought, that all the friends, whose jealousies he had excited, wished to know, was, how the money subscribed for the contingent fund was expended.'—— They then promise, that 'they shall be gratified in this too, the next conference, if we can have any influence.'—— To make the subject ridiculous, they observe, 'to publish only the gross *sum* raised for *each charity* in *each circuit*, will not be sufficient. The sum received from *each society* in each circuit must also be printed; nay, and that received from *each individual* in each society, otherwise there will still be room for deception.'

If these fathers think to scout the idea of detailing, by placing it in this ridiculous light, others will view it in a more favourable point. It would be exceedingly easy to give the people all the satisfaction they can reasonably desire, in a different way. Only let all the collections be received by the stewards—the stewards send them to delegates appointed from the circuits to attend the district meetings—and at the district meetings let delegates be appointed to attend the conference, and carry in the collections, &c.—If the preachers never received any of the collections, it would not be possible for jealousies to exist on this head.

In order to embarrass the subject, they wish me to propose a plan to watch stewards, class leaders, persons that receive seat tickets, &c. They say, 'We submit it to his consideration, whether there ought not to be *one or more* persons in each class, chosen by a majority of votes, to count the pence, and watch the leaders as to these particulars; and then, as these persons also may be capable of being bribed, and becoming accomplices in the sacrilege, whether others again should not be appointed to watch them, and so on, till watchful jealousy has pervaded and spread its influence to the whole body, and to every individual of it,' &c.

If Messrs. Mather, &c. think to raise a mist before the people this way, to prevent them from viewing the su

ject in a proper light, their end will not be accomplished. Besides, in my judgment, it would be better to have all the watchers they mention, not to excite, but prevent jealousies, than to put too much confidence in the priest-hood. Implicit faith in ministers of Christ, is an evil that ought to be dreaded. Every honest man wishes to act by rules that will bear the strictest examination. The plan we propose, of having the collections put into the hands of stewards and delegates, would free them from a number of difficulties, and at the same time, it would satisfy the societies at large.

Mr. Rodda's letter is brought forward again. It was a dirty paper, unsealed (not like a letter) left on the table in the vestry-room, at Salford. When my friend's curiosity led him to open it, and when he saw the word *bull*, he read it through; and thinking that evidence could be brought from the *very persons* that *violently opposed* and reproached me, he favoured me with the letter.——Does Mr. Benson suppose, because this friend imagined I should want evidence, that it is just for him to conclude, that I published a number of things before I knew of evidence to make them good? Will his three notes of admiration make this conclusion just? When I acknowledged myself satisfied on some parts of this letter, it was from the accounts I heard in the conference, being so favourable. But when we retired from the chapel, and several preachers gave a different account of the matter, declaring themselves very much dissatisfied, I soon beheld the subject in a different light, and felt what I have expressed in my trial.—It is not of very great importance whether my friend found the letter on the table or on the floor, as Mr. Mather had left the room, and was engaged in the chapel. When this letter came to my hand, from the very men that were reproaching me, and declaring I had published a number of lies, it appeared exceedingly strange, that I should be able, out of their own mouth, to bring evidence in confirmation of what I had published. In my letter to Mr. Mather, inclosing Mr. Rodda's letter, I said, 'By a singular (not divine, as they have published) providence, this letter has fallen into my hands.' When the letter was read, Mr. Pawson cried out, 'It was a devilish providence.' Mr. Rodda, perhaps, might make use of the same words.

As

As they have brought up the letter so often, and endeavoured to palliate its contents, I think it my duty now to publish that part of it, which refers to our affairs.—The following is a copy as near verbatim as possible. It is so in every material expression, but in a place or two, where the paper was folded, a few words could not be made out. The sense, however, in those places is retained :

A Copy of a Letter from Mr. Rodda to Mr. Mather.

Newcastle, March 26, 1796.

My Dear Sir,

Your kind favour came to hand this morning ; accept my thanks. If all our brethren saw things in the light we do, there would not be a jarring string in all our connexion. I have possession of Mr. Kilham's Methodistical Bull.—Whenever I see hasty productions, two Greek proverbs occur to my mind :—‘ Speak nothing, or that which is better than nothing.’—‘ Think twice before you speak once.’ I am fond of no man's writing controversy, in effect, to do evil that good may come. The author has attacked characters, and basely slandered them that have done credit to our religious society, when the writer lay in the loins of his father.—How truly may a Hopper, a M——r, a Thompson, and many others, individually say, ‘ But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have scorned to have set with the dogs of my flock.’ What is said by the owners of the bull, ‘ We may take our farewell of primitive Methodism,’ has been deeply anticipated by three or four of the men, ever since the death of Mr. Wesley.

‘ Where the assistants are held forth as a company of whining jesuits, though the charge does not implicate my guilt, as being out of office, yet it affects me as an unjust and uncharitable charge, brought against a very respectable branch of our body ; and when that part is well filled, is essentially necessary to our well-being. I have been informed that the district have met, and done nothing.—I am far from being a friend to intolerance ; but am sure many things since Mr. Wesley's death have been passed

over almost in silence ; which had his place been filled in the executive part of our government, would have been greatly censured, if not expelled the authors of them.

‘ What would a K—— (a Kilham) say of Dr. C—— and H—— M—— taking eighteen guineas at a time out of the book money, without the knowledge or consent of the book committee ? as was the case when I was a member of it, and with Mr. Bradford and Creighton, bore my testimony against it. Or J. Rogers secreting the deeds of the goods in the preachers’ house in London, in keeping it from the gentlemen whose names were in it ?——Or of the late peculation in the Kingswood money ? I write now to a friend, who, had he been at the head of affairs and continued so, would not have passed over these transactions unnoticed. You talk of retiring—so do I. But can we retire any whither where our eyes will not affect our hearts.——Will not Methodism be torn into a thousand pieces. Alas ! it is nearly at its *ne plus ultra*.——I am fully persuaded, the day you stood upon your feet, and did not use them in the slow or quick march, you might truly have said at night,——‘ My friends, I have lost a day.’

‘ Mr. Benson informs me, he has no small trouble with the sacramentarians. He advises me to continue as long as I can. I am come to no determination about it.’

‘ R. RODDA.’

The main point in this letter is the 80l. To the best of my knowledge, the name of the person who received the money was never mentioned in the conference. I asked several preachers after, if they knew who received it, but they were ignorant of the person’s name. At the time of the conference, it was supposed, that a mistake might be made in counting the money. It seemed uncertain, whether it was peculated or not ; but in the Affectionate Address, published since the conference, we have these words : ‘ Mr. Pawson is happy to say, that in the presence of several witnesses, he delivered up the money ; nothing was wanting then, as a letter from Mr. Bradford received this day bears witness, who was present at the time.’——Here we have a positive declaration, that the money was paid in by Mr. Pawson, in the presence of several witnesses ;

witnesses; *nothing* was then wanting. But the name of the person who received it is kept back. If it were all paid in—if nothing were wanting, it must be either lost or peculated. In the last pamphlet they have made the matter

‘Worse for mending—washed to fouler stains.’

They say, ‘At the Bristol Conference in 1794, Messrs. Pawson and Bradford counted the Kingswood collection, and delivered it to Mr. Bradburn, with a note of the sum.—Afterwards when he delivered it, with the note specifying the sum to Mr. Rodda, it was deficient, according to what Messrs. Pawson and Bradford counted it. This is the simple fact, which we apprehend may be accounted for, without the charge of peculation, although, in the confidence of friendship that term had been used by Mr. R——. For all men conversant with money matters know, that mistakes often do and will arise many ways.—The most strict and serious enquiry was made into the business the conference next ensuing. But where the mistake is in this case, we confess we are not able to determine.’—It appears very strange that these brethren should have overlooked what the Affectionate Address declares, that is, Mr. Pawson’s happiness in assuring us, he paid the *whole sum* in the presence of several witnesses—that nothing was wanting.

It appears evident, that Mr. Rodda, about a year and a half after that conference, considered the money to be peculated. And according to this pamphlet, it must have been lost or peculated, while in Mr. Bradburn’s possession. This is not a forced inference, but what naturally arises from reading the two pamphlets together. My charity would have been called ‘pure malice,’ had I brought a charge so close to any brother of such a nature.

5. Mr. R——’s case is brought up again. Mr. Dawson seems very tenacious of his honour. I have already stated this subject in the trial, and shall only add here,

1. That he has forgotten to inform us, that the horse Mr. R—— bought, was left in his hands for sale, by Mr. Gates, his brother-in-law, a travelling preacher.

2. That when Mr. R—— went there, he prevailed on him to buy his brother’s horse, at a price which many of the friends thought far too high

3. I repeat again, ' If I mistook in a trivial circumstance, it was owing to the information I had at the Newcastle district meeting from two respectable preachers.' Mr. Dawson, after conversing with one of them, did not by any means prevail on him to deny, that the subject was named in the district meeting, in the manner I have published.—Mr. Hunter declared many things exceedingly severe of Mr. R—— which he knew to be facts, as he had followed him in the circuit where he had travelled. And he was one that mentioned the account as I at first published it.—I do not attempt to throw ' the guilt of lying' upon these persons. It was worthy of no such name.

4. Mr. Dawson appeared satisfied with my letter, as two persons witnessed to his face when I was in his presence.—The friend that he says, ' was only asked the night before,' had mentioned the circumstance before that time, which was the reason of the question being proposed to him then. Is it generous in Mr. Dawson to attempt to invalidate the testimony of a respectable person, because he would not declare against what he had heard him mention?

5. If Mr. Dawson had not been satisfied when I spoke with him on my way to the conference, why did he not declare it, when we conversed together on the subject?

Mr. Benson lets loose upon the subject: He says, ' this benevolent man must be an avowed opposer of tale-bearing, backbiting, and slandering the innocent, &c.' When I said, every person capable of judging will be able to discern how far this (his being an avowed opposer of my measures) might influence him in writing. Mr. B—— on this is very warm. He says, ' Influence him—what to do? to tell a direct and wilful lie. All that are acquainted with Mr. D—— and his approved veracity, will be able to discern what a vile and groundless insinuation this is.' This is Mr. Benson's rhetoric; and if he were not thus to ease his mind occasionally, he would not know how to get forward.

Mr. Benson says, ' But you will observe, that the principal thing the conference blamed Mr. K—— for, respecting Mr. R——, was, his endeavouring to reproach the body, by bringing up the character of one they had some time before suspended, and concealing from the world the circumstance of his suspension. ' But I did not know this circumstance (says he) till after I had published the account.'

count.' No! This is very extraordinary indeed! He did not know that one of his brethren was suspended by the conference for misconduct! A fit person indeed to write about their affairs!

In my account of the trial we have these words, which Mr. Benson seems to have overlooked:—'After his case had been considered in the Manchester Conference, and a number of preachers pleaded for his expulsion, he was continued, and his name put down for many circuits before he was fixed for Barnardcastle. When the people in that place, who knew his character, knew of his appointment, they sent a letter to the conference, declaring they would not receive him. The letter reached Manchester, when many of us had left the conference, and it was then that he was suspended. The people in Barnardcastle in effect suspended him. I did not know but he was sent to that place by the conference, [Does not his name stand on the minutes for it in 1795?] and rejected by the people, till after I had published the account. And my knowing he was suspended by the influence of that society, did not alter the case in favour of the conference.'

If Mr. Benson and his brethren, had acted as fair opponents, they would have controverted this passage in my trial. This would have carried more conviction than exclaiming, 'He did not know that one of his brethren was suspended by the conference for misconduct! A fit person indeed to write about their affairs!'

It is possible for the persons in Ripon, who are my 'friends and abettors,' once to have been favourable to Mr. R———; is this any disparagement to their character? Should they continue his 'friends and abettors,' if they know him to be living in sin, or acting contrary to the gospel? then they might be reflected on. But I hope that they will not be abettors to any, whom they have reason to believe are not living godly in Christ Jesus.

Had not Mr. Benson better come forward openly, and attack the Leeds friends by name, than do it covertly, in the following words? 'An instance this, similar to one at Leeds. For the friends and abettors of a certain character there, excluded in like manner for bad behaviour, have been some of the foremost to aid and support Mr. K——— in opposing the conference, because he says, they have kept persons in connexion guilty of misconduct!! Such is their

their consistency, and their deep concern for the purity, discipline, and good order of the body ! !'

1. Several of the society in Leeds, were friendly to Mr. Thoresby, and perhaps to this day think his guilt not equal to his punishment.

2. They were his ' friends and abettors,' while they thought it right in the sight of God ; but no person can charge those that favour me, in general, with separating from the society on his account or on mine.

3. I apprehend, the persons Mr. Benson calls my ' friends and abettors,' in Leeds, are as pious and as great lovers of ' purity, discipline, and good order,' as any persons in that society.

4. They by no means wish to keep persons in the society guilty of misconduct, or preachers of this description in the connexion ; but they wish every person to have a fair trial, and nothing to be done through strife or partiality.

5. Are they my abettors ' because I oppose the conference, and say they have kept persons in the connexion, guilty of misconduct ?' Is there nothing else in what I have written that leads them to be my friends but these two things ?

6. Is there any inconsistency in their being friendly to me, and their deep concern for ' purity, discipline, and good order in the body ?' Does Mr. Benson suppose, that four notes of admiration on this passage, are a sure proof of the reason and good sense it contains ? Is it not amazingly strange, that he and his brethren, should be angry at the people in any place befriending me, under a conviction that I have been injured, and that the cause I am pleading, is for the welfare of our people ?

6. Another ' instance of misrepresentation, is in the case of that brother whom the conference declared to be most honourably acquitted.' I shall insert here, the remarks circulated in a letter, soon after their pamphlet appeared.

In the 16th, 17th, and 18th pages, they represent me as a *mere swindler*, in selling my mare for 14l. to Mr. G—. When the whole affair was examined in the conference, Mr. G— begged they would not publish any thing on the subject. He said, I had not charged him with swindling, but had only said several persons considered it as a species of swindling. When the conference published the account, concealing his name, I purposely concealed mine, that he

might

might have no room to reflect on me, respecting this matter. It was not from fear of the people knowing that I sold him the mare. This transaction will bear the light of the strictest examination. Heaven and earth can witness to the truth of the following particulars:

1. A fine blood mare, belonging to one of our friends in Lincolnshire, when she was breaking, took a fright in a market-place, fell down, and broke her knees: having her at a bad farrier's, he applied what prevented the hair from growing, which was a very great loss to him: she had the appearance, by her knees, of coming down: and as she was a young mare, this was exceedingly against the sale of her. He suffered me to ride her a month on trial, and as I was just coming out to travel, and had my horse to buy, without any help from the people, he kindly let me have her for eight pounds. He considered it almost as giving her away: as she would have sold for more than twenty pounds, cheap as horses then were, had she been found.

2. I rode her for several years—she was very sure footed, and one of the best mares that ever was saddled, as our friends can testify, in the circuits where I have travelled.

3. Though she lost an eye while she was mine, yet her usefulness was not hindered by it. If she had been found at the time when I parted with her, she was worth upwards of thirty pounds.

4. Mr. G—— rode her a year with me in Newcastle.—He once rode her from *Sunderland* to Newcastle in an hour, which is thirteen miles, and hilly road.

5. When it was fixed for me to go into Scotland, he offered me 14*l.* for her of his own accord. We mutually agreed upon deferring the business, till we should meet in Northumberland, and consult our friends. After he had advised with the friends, and considered on the price for a month, he determined to have her. I urged him to nothing else, but either to resolve on having her or not, that I might dispose of her before I left England.

6. A farmer in the neighbourhood of Newcastle, was very fond of her: He declared she was well worth that money: And if words have any meaning, he wished to have her, if Mr. G—— refused.

(To be concluded in the next number.)

The following excellent printed letter was written by Mr. Br———ell, one of the travelling preachers in Sheffield, and sent to the preachers through the connexion.— They keep it so close, that hardly *any* of their intimate friends know that such a letter has been circulated.— Mr. Br———ell's piety and usefulness are so well known, that respect will be paid to his sentiments every where. This copy was taken from one I met with providentially. The person I received it from told me, it was verbatim. If a few words, by copying, are altered, the sense is retained.



SHEFFIELD, 10th Nov. 1796.

Dear Brethren,

My mind has been so deeply impressed with the present state of our connexion, and I feel such anxious solicitude to avert every impending evil, that I am compelled to break through the barrier, which my deference to your superior judgment would create; and faithfully, yet affectionately, to make this one solemn appeal to you all.

I have long been penetrated with the liveliest sorrow, at perceiving an evident decline of that *burning zeal*, that *active perseverance*, that *vital holiness*, that *lamenting love*, which actuated the first Methodist preachers; and which enabled them victoriously to triumph over every obstacle—having their hearts filled with a sense of the important undertaking—the fire burning in their own hearts—swallowed up by love of souls, bought by the Redeemer's blood, they scorned to lose a moment in disputing about external forms—they deprecated every strife, but the *noble strife* of excelling each other in enlarging the Redeemer's kingdom. Alas! my brethren, we have entered into their labours, but have we retained their spirit?

At the last Bristol Conference, the Lord made a great offer to many of the preachers; some received it, but others rejected. An attempt was made at the Manchester Conference, privately and publicly, to set the revival in a

true

true light, and to restore vital godliness among the preachers: in several this had the desired effect. Before the last London Conference, we had encouragement from several of the senior brethren, that a strict investigation of the preachers' experience would take place; but nothing was done. We are fully satisfied, that it is not church government, or any other outward form, which causes the present agitation and division; but that God has a controversy with us as a body. We want the power of religion among ourselves. This alone can perpetuate the union of love, and then all things would be done in peace and harmony.

When were we asked the state of our souls, since we were received into the connexion? We may be *proud, passionate, envious, malicious, covetous, self-willed, brawlers, and triflers, given to jesting, yea, tiplers*; we may oppose the *real work of God*, may turn hundreds out of the way, and yet remain travelling preachers.

Whatever we are, when we enter upon the great work of the ministry, we may lose our *first love, zeal, faith, patience, hope, yea, every grace*, and yet go round the circuit, carrying about *the ghost of a preacher, who being dead, yet speaketh*.

Brethren!—Brethren! is it not time that something should be done to reform ourselves: Have we not for years been labouring for *forced unity and external peace*, debating on forms and shadows, and thereby departing more from our centre. And could things be brought into unity this way, would it not settle us in formality, and unscripture stillness? Must not the cause be removed before the effects can cease? The axe must be laid to the root, and then our preaching, conversation, and example, will produce, under God, the principle and effects of faith and love, and we shall all be one in Christ Jesus. ✓

It has been one rule with several of us for years, to speak evil of no man. We are also decidedly against what is called ranterism or wildness, as we are against lukewarmness or dead formality. Also all kinds of noise in public or private, without the Spirit's influence; and believe there may be a formal noise, as there may be a formal stillness. We have laboured by doctrine, conversation, and example, to distinguish between the precious and the vile, and our manner

manner among the people will evidence this truth.—— But we have seen, in numberless instances, that if a preacher does not give his whole heart and action to the work, he has no power in the revival.——If a preacher be truly alive to God, he may in every circuit prevent false fire, intemperate zeal, carnal noise, and yet be a means of preserving the operation of the Spirit, in awakening, pardoning, sanctifying, and filling with that love which produces every good word and work.—— But violence against the effects of the Spirit, creates violence in the subjects, and the consequence of this is prejudice, debate, and opposition, which destroy religion in preacher and people. One preacher labours with all his might to bring souls to God—the next in turn destroys what God hath wrought.

We tenderly call upon every brother, to read once more Wesley's Journals, David Brainard's, Thomas Walsh's, Gillie's Collections, Edwards's Evidences.—— Compare these with the Acts of the Apostles—and the whole with our present mode of proceeding, and then determine, whether we have not departed from the simplicity of the gospel?——And we intreat every brother to join us in continual prayer to God, That the life and power of true religion may be increased in all our hearts, that we may all be filled with the fulness of God.

I am, your affectionate servant,

W. B.



✚ As this Number is chiefly filled with Answers to Messrs. Mather, &c. which could not well be delayed, the EDITOR, in the next Number, will resume the Subjects that have been omitted.

No. VI.

THE

Methodist Monitor.

“ Assemble together, and consider the matter as in the presence of God ; and if it shall be found agreeable to the majority, that you should have these privileges, let it be done accordingly. *And let this Christian and brotherly method be always taken, in order to make known your mind to the conference.*”

MR. JOHN PAWSON.

R E M A R K S

On a Pamphlet, entitled, ‘ A Defence of the Conduct of the Conference, in the Expulsion of Alexander Kilham,’ by Messrs. Mather, Pawson, and Benson,

(Continued from Page 201.)

7. I Appeal to every reasonable person, if any thing could be fairer than this conduct? The price was of his own fixing, after he had rode her better than a year, and was agreed on after he had consulted his friends. If I had received her as a gift, nothing could be more equitable than my conduct in disposing of her. And so far from constraining the circuit-steward to give me the extra-
S money,

money,' one of them generously advanced it, determining I should not go into Scotland without it.

1. When I parted with the mare, she was sound in all her feet. She was gently rode, and well looked after when she was mine. Six miles an hour was the pace I travelled, when on a journey; but nothing like that pace when I supplied the circuit, unless in particular cases.

2. Mr. G—— had her near three years in his own hands, after I went into Scotland, before he parted with her. Two of those years he praised her as one of the best mares in the world. And when, by unmerciful riding, she was laid up, he still spoke highly of her.

3. So far from those words being true, 'nor could he, after seeking to sell her, for several months, get more offered for her than 3l. 10s.' Mr. S. Gardener gave him 5l. for her; and while she was his he got her covered. When Mr. Embleton informed Mr. G——, that he had sold her far too cheap, and offered him 7l. for her, Mr. Gardener generously gave her up. She soon was able to travel after Mr. Embleton had bought her; and a little before the last conference, he was so fond of her, as a breeding mare, that he would not have taken twenty guineas for her and her foal.

4. The mare Mr. G—— sold, was never valued, by any person capable of forming a proper judgment, for any thing like 13l. Eleven pounds were her full value.— Mr. Emmet, who bought her, soon parted with her in exchange, either at the price he gave, or for less.

5. It is well known, that the friends were invited from all parts of the circuit to the quarterly meeting, that he might have the subject brought forward; and saying, Mr. G—— 'had no knowledge or intention of any thing of the kind,' is a very bold assertion.

6. I still maintain, that Mr. G—— ought to have told his friends, that he had received a balance of 3l. 17s. towards the 7l. he lost by the mare; otherwise he ought to have returned that balance to the Newcastle circuit stewards.

7. It was *his concealing this sum* that caused several friends to reflect on him.

8. I appeal to the circuits where he travelled, whether Mr. G—— 'expended near 2l. out of his own little property,' upon the mare? Did not the circuits pay the farrying

farrying bill, &c.? Upon the whole, I neither 'out-witted,' nor swindled this brother out of his property.—And had I done this in reality, it is out of the power of any man, or number of men, to justify Mr. G—— in *concealing the balance* mentioned above, unless he had returned it to the Newcastle friends. The candid and impartial will be able to judge how far he 'was most honourably acquitted by the conference.'

It would be easy to apply a number of epithets here, to the persons that have accused me. This account is published from hearsay evidence.—It misrepresents the whole affair.—It slanders my character unjustly.—It is designed to make me odious to the people. I will, however, only quote their own words:—'Oh, Brethren!—but I spare them. God be merciful to them!—For if detraction, slander, and false accusations be sins, they are sinners indeed.'

7. They say, 'it would be endless to point out all the instances of misrepresentation that occur in his pamphlet. The allowance (he states, London Bull, page 18.) for preachers and their families, *granted everywhere, without respect to age, abilities, or usefulness, is 107l. 10s. per annum.*' Is this a fair representation of what I published in the London Bull? By this quotation the reader is informed, that I have declared, 'the allowance for preachers and their families is 107l. 10s.' If they had quoted the following words, the matter would not have been a mystery. But they knew it would not answer their purpose. They could not then have wrought upon the passions of the people.—These are my words: 'I will make the account for a preacher, with a wife, and four children, intreating the reader to observe, that our allowance is in proportion to the number of our family, throughout all our circuits.' This account is made for a preacher with a wife and four children. Let the stewards where Messrs. Benson, Pawson, and Mather are travelling be asked, if they have for twelve years past supported a preacher, with a wife and four children, for any thing like this sum. I apprehend, in many places, the people could bring an account near double what I have mentioned, for the family alluded to. I rated the preachers board at the price it costs the connexion.—And any person acquainted with our affairs is conscious, that when the preacher is from home, he costs the people

in general, more than one shilling and sixpence a day.— It is true, this does not, in many circuits, go in hard money to the family; perhaps not half of it; but in other circuits it does. For where there are two preachers, it often happens, that the young man boards with the family, and the allowance goes regularly on every week. Why does Mr. Benson attack the subject as though I had said, ‘every preacher and his family have 107l. 10s. per annum?’ Why does he overlook what I have said, ‘that our allowance is in proportion to the number of our family, *throughout all our circuits?*’

If a preacher have no wife or children, he has no allowance for them. If he have not a boy at Kingswood-school, the connexion has nothing to expend on that account.— They say, ‘I make house-rent, furniture, letters, and turnpikes, a pretty handsome sum.’ What is the sum I have put down for house rent, coal and candles, letters, turnpikes, and furniture? *Seventeen pounds ten shillings.* Is this half as much, as what Messrs. Mather, Pawson, and Benson cost the connexion, in these particulars? I appeal to the different circuits, whether or not, my account upon the whole is exaggerated. And though in the single instance of board, as it refers to many circuits, the preacher may not have the money paid in cash, yet I maintain, that he costs the connexion the sum I have named. And as it refers to a number of circuits, this money is received weekly by the family.

They say, ‘but what will you think when he comes forward a second time, and tells you, (page 50 of his Trial) ‘that the income of those that are in rich circuits is near double what many preachers have that are in small, poor circuits, where they are but little at home;’ and, that ‘there is as much difference between their circumstances and those of their brethren in other places, as there is between many rectors and poor curates.’ What can you think if you believe him, but that of consequence some of us have, at least, 200l.? Now we ask not, is this true? But is it any thing like true? Nay, is there a *shadow* of truth in it? We affirm there is not. Their income near double what many preachers have that are in poor circuits! Most extraordinary! The truth is, that all the material difference between one circuit and another is, 1. That in some circuits a little more, perhaps a pound or two a year,

is allowed for a servant than in others. 2. In some, perhaps, in four or five in the whole connexion, a little more is allowed for the preachers' cloaths, and books, than in others, viz. twelve pounds twelve shillings, or sixteen pounds, instead of the common allowance, which is only twelve pounds per annum. 3. In some circuits where, as he says, the preachers are more at home, they receive more of course for their board than in others, where they are chiefly in the country. But we may venture to assert, that the difference between one circuit and another, even if these particulars be all included, seldom amount in advantage, to above ten or twelve pounds per annum, and very rarely to so much. And is this an income double to what the preachers have in poor circuits? I have quoted this passage at full length, that the reader may examine it carefully, and not be misled by appearances.

I shall state facts, and leave the candid to judge, whether I am farther from the truth than these worthy fathers.—The calculation shall be between Liverpool and Hexham. The married preachers in the former place have the allowance regularly every week; in the latter place, the preacher is three nights (we will say four) at home in a month.

LIVERPOOL.

	£.	S.	D.
1. Board, at 15s. per week,	39	0	0
2. Quarterage, himself and wife,	25	4	0
3. Servant's wages,	12	12	0
4. Travelling expences; but hardly ever goes from home,	2	2	0
House-rent, coal, and candle, Mr. Moore, for one year,	30	16	0

£ 109 14 0

HEXHAM.

	£.	S.	D.
1. Four nights per month, at 1s. 6d. per night,	3	18	0
2. Quarterage, man and wife,	24	0	0
3. Servant's wages,	6	0	0
4. Travelling expences—all, or most consumed—not more in hand than	0	10	0
House rent, coal, and candle,	16	0	0

£ 30 8 0
You

S 3

You may charge what you think proper for the 45 weeks he is from home in the year.

If the preacher were at home these 45 weeks, as he would be, were he in Liverpool, it would be a great advantage to his family at 1s. 6d. per night. It frequently happens, that preachers in the best circuits have property of their own to a considerable amount; and yet, many of them receive from the connexion, the same yearly allowance, as though they had nothing.

Added to this, in large towns they frequently dine from home, have presents in money, and in apparel, to a considerable amount, which brings their yearly income to near, if not more than double what it is at Hexham, and many other circuits. I am bold to aver, that my assertion is 'something like true;' and that when these worthy fathers ask, 'Is there a shadow of truth in it?' It may be answered—there is. It is perhaps as near the truth, as any calculation could be, without fully examining the particulars. They may cry out, 'Most extraordinary!' And multiply notes of admiration to ornament their work, but this does not alter the case. And when they say, 'ten or twelve pounds per annum, is the only difference,' or words to that effect, their assertion, when fairly examined, is found far short of the real difference. This is self evident to those who will stoop to examine the subject, as it refers to Liverpool, and several other circuits.

8. 'One more instance of misrepresentation we will point out? 'Mr. Mather (he says, Trial, page 25.) was greatly displeased at the Manchester Conference, when he heard of the paper signed by 57 preachers, requesting that all our laws might be made so explicit, that none of them might be capable of a double meaning. Mr. M—— rose up, declaring he would leave the connexion;' that is, he would rather leave the connexion than agree to have the laws made explicit!! Now, we ask, was this the fact? Is there a preacher in the connexion, who was present at the time, that will say it was a fact? We apprehend not. The plain fact was, Mr. M—— stood up because Mr. Kilham affirmed, that 'our laws were revolutionary,' and must be always changing, meaning, especially, the plan of pacification, &c.' Nothing can be more contrary to matter of fact than this.

I. When

1. When the rules of pacification were first read, I said they were better than we supposed they would be, and if we considered them as revolutionary, they were more tolerable than might have been expected. Mr. Mather then stood up, and attacked the word 'revolutionary' with a great deal of warmth. But this is not the time I allude to.

2. A committee of the preachers met the trustees, and had a long conversation with them, after the debate in the conference upon the word named above. And it was after that meeting that the word *separation* was agitated in the conference. 3. When the leading preachers declared, whatever number left us it was no separation, unless they had a preacher at their head, several of us requested they would publish, honestly, their exposition of the word.

4. When they refused, I drew up a paper (which will be inserted by and by) protesting against having rules to mean one thing to ourselves, and another to the people.— This paper was signed by 57 preachers, and given to Mr. Bradford.

5. A preacher or preachers clamoured against the paper to Mr. Bradford, and he being president, ungenerously destroyed it before it was read in full conference.

6. When we returned one day from dinner, Mr. Mather having heard of the paper, was exceedingly warm. He cried out loudly against our measures. He carried matters so far, as to declare he would leave us. In the conflict he was so irritated, as to be obliged to sit down, and pant for breath.

7. Whether Mr. Mather declared he would leave us, because the laws were required in the paper to be made explicit, or not, it was on account of that very paper, that he made use of this declaration. And whatever Mr. Benson, &c. may say to the contrary, I appeal to the preachers who were present, that it was at the time I have stated, Mr. M—— proposed leaving us, and not at the time a dispute took place upon the word revolutionary. Five notes of admiration, are not sufficient to make this point clear beyond contradiction.

8. I am conscious, that several of the preachers in the meeting after my expulsion, declared, that there were different things in the plan, they were as much averse to as I could be.

1. I offered to be subject to them, as far as they were consistent with the scriptures.

2. But when I refused to comply in all the senses Mr. Bradburn mentioned, they considered this as sufficient to refuse all farther terms of reconciliation. 3. As most of the preachers do not approve of several things in the pacific plan, would it not have been as easy for me to have continued in the connexion as them, when I offered to comply with all the rules of that plan, as far as they are consistent with the scriptures? (See the 45th page of my Trial before the Conference.)

As an argument for my expulsion, they insinuate, that my sentiments on religion and politics have differed from theirs; 'Many of us have long known, that his sentiments are not the same with ours on some points of great importance; and points which we are well assured, our people in general would judge *fundamental*, &c. But when he has with unwearied diligence promulgated from the pulpit and the press, opinions *inimical* to, and destructive of the plan of discipline, not to say doctrine also—traduced many valuable and important characters, and asserted things which he is not able to prove, to the great disquiet of the whole connexion, we have no alternative but to put him from us.'

If I have the right of private judgment, so long as this does not interfere with any thing important in Methodism, this privilege may be enjoyed by me. But so far from ever uttering a sentence against the doctrines, considered as fundamental, I have preached them with as much clearness as my ability would admit of. And I think, those who know me are convinced, if I thought any doctrine more important, I have honesty enough to avow my sentiments. On speculative doctrines, not essential to salvation, we may think different from each other. I never made any * assistant preacher a promise, 'not to promulgate these sentiments,

* The following Letter was published in the Manchester Gazette, on Dec. 10, 1796. The Author is unknown to us, or the Printers.

Messrs. Cowdroy and Boden.

Gentlemen,

Please to insert the following passage in your useful paper, as a proof that infractions of religious liberty are not peculiar to one single party;
but

ments, either from the pulpit or the press, or even in private conversation, and that he would not recommend or spread the books published in support of them.' I should consider myself *a slave*, under the name of a Methodist preacher, were I to make such an abject promise to any assistant. The books alluded to, are Winchester's Dialogues and his Lectures, with other publications of the same nature, upon the universal restitution of all things.

Previous to my expulsion, I never made the pulpit a place to name the subjects in, which are agitated among us. I think it degrading to the ministry to make ser-

but that *even those who depend upon a toleration* for the liberty they enjoy, are capable of making such attempts on that of others, as are both inconsistent with the best ideas of religious liberty, and destructive of that exclusive allegiance which is due to JESUS, the only Legislator in the christian church, to whom an unreserved and universal obedience is commanded to be paid :

"Mr. K——'s of right private judgment no man wishes to invade. He might have THOUGHT for himself in these instances, as he had long done respecting some others of no small moment, both in religion and politics. Many of us have long known that his sentiments are not the same with our's, on some points of great importance, and points which, we are all assured, our people in general would think fundamental. Nevertheless, on his promise, made to his assistant, *not to promulge* these sentiments, either from the pulpit or the press, or even in PRIVATE CONVERSATION, and that he would not RECOMMEND or SPREAD the BOOKS *published in support* of them, we have BORE with him, and SUFFERED him to labour with us till now." [Vide Defence of the Conduct of the Conference in the Expulsion of A. Kilham, page 21, 22.]

The pamphlet from which the above passage is taken, has the signatures of Messrs. Mather, Pawson, and Benson; who, it seems, are some of the most eminent preachers among the Methodists.

It is not my design to interest myself at all in the controversy between these gentlemen and Mr. K——, who is represented as having made so weak and injudicious a promise. I would only observe, that as no church, excepting that of Rome, ever advanced so unjust and exorbitant a claim; every friend to the rights of conscience, cannot but sincerely wish, that these gentlemen would have considered the meaning and tendency of such expressions, before they ventured to adopt sentiments, or indulge themselves in practices, which, were they (as they might with equal justice) to be turned against them, could not but excite the heaviest complaints of cruelty, oppression, and PERSECUTION.

PHILELEUTHERUS.

MONS

mons on controverted points, either of doctrine or discipline. If a man have any thing to say on these subjects, let him do it after the sermon, or from the press. The latter is preferable. It is the way I pursued, previous to my expulsion. 'To say, that I have 'traduced many valuable and important characters,' without proving it, cannot satisfy the impartial. I deny the charge, and will meet any man upon the face of my pamphlets, and controvert this point with him. If any great and good characters have grasped after undue power and influence in our connexion, exposing themselves to censure, this cannot be justly called traducing their characters. They ask, in the same paragraph, 'judge, brethren, can we, on any principle of religion, morality, prudence or common sense, continue to give the right-hand of fellowship to such a one?'—— If religion, morality, prudence, and common sense, required my expulsion, it would have been highly criminal to have continued me in the connexion. Is this the language of men acting under the influence of the Spirit of God, or is it similar to what Rome made use of, when father Martin Luther was excommunicated?

They add, 'Besides, can any candid man blame us for choosing to whom we will give the right-hand of fellowship, or with whom we will labour in our Lord's vineyard?—— Are not we, as well as others, to be allowed the right of common Englishmen, the right of judging for ourselves in a matter of such moment. But we have not convinced him that he is in an error.—No! nor has he convinced us.—We therefore leave him to follow his way, and we will follow our's.'

If I had been a member of the conference, unconnected with the people, this language might have passed. But when it is remembered, that I was united to the body at large, had they a right to expel me without their knowledge or consent? Does not this passage speak the people and preachers two distinct bodies? Does the choice of fellow-labourers rest solely with the preachers, or have the people a right to be heard on this subject? Is it the right of Englishmen to try, cast, condemn, and expel, when the accusers are judge and jury? or is this the right of Rome? As the people are not consulted on this head, nor heard, when they come forward to plead for a proper share in the choice and expulsion of their ministers, their state resembles

bles the members of the church of Rome, more than that of Jesus Christ.

Hear the language of these fathers on this subject.—But 'who is to judge in this case? The preachers, or a jury of the people? Judge, in *what* case. In connection with whom we are to labour in the Lord's vineyard? Can any one ask such a question as this in the land of liberty? &c.' Here they spurn the very idea of the people having a right to be a jury in the case of a preacher, who offends the conference. When they accuse they must be judges and jury also, and have a secret trial, otherwise their interests and the people's would be united, and this would bring Methodism on a level with christianity in this matter.—

Can any one ask such questions as these 'in this land of liberty?' Must not a man suppose himself at Rome, before he dare ask, Whether or not a Methodist preacher is to be secretly examined in a district meeting, and in the conference, and not to be allowed the common rights of Englishmen? To be tried, cast, and condemned there, by his accusers, resembles Rome, because he had the courage to take away the veil, and give the people to understand, how their confidence has been abused in a number of instances. Surely the right-hand of fellowship could not be continued by those who determine to keep our friends in the dark, and to hide from their view a number of things, which they have a right to be acquainted with!

They add, 'But many of the people are of his mind, both that his trial was not fair, and that his plan ought to be adopted.' Certainly they have a right to think so, and prefer his single testimony to that of 150, if they choose, and even to withdraw from us, and unite with him.—But let them remember, it is *they* that change, and not *we*. We remain still on the old ground, &c.'

When my single testimony brings facts before the people, on which they are capable of judging, it may have as much weight as the testimony of a thousand. Because the matter does not rest upon the number of persons that bear witness to it, but upon the facts which are adduced.—What the conference and I have published respecting my trial, rests solely on the facts we relate, that they are privy to, and not upon our bare testimony. If the friends are not aware of this, they may be led to suppose, that 150 ought to be believed sooner than one. Only carefully distinguish

tinguish between facts that must be judged of by the people, and testimony, and then you will see that one is as good as ten thousand. For instance, suppose a person should declare the sun shines; and were an hundred and fifty to deny it, you would examine the subject, and make up your judgment accordingly. If upon examination, you found the sun did shine, you would prefer the testimony of one to an hundred and fifty.

What do they mean by 'the old ground?' Do they suppose that the plan now pursued is the same with that which was established from the beginning? Did the preachers then assume as much power and consequence as they do now?—Were they as expensive to the people?—Did they travel as little then, and act as much like gentlemen, as the preachers do now?—Had they the *golden rules* of the preachers' fund then, in such worldly perfection as they are now?

The name of 'old ground' remains, but where is the preacher that has it so often in his lips, that would wish to tread it, as the preachers did thirty or forty years ago? It is because the old ground is forsaken in a great measure, that we complain. And yet we are represented, as evil affected towards the preachers, striving to make the people to come forward and overturn or change the whole system of Methodism, 'both in doctrine and discipline.'—All this is said with a design to keep the people from examining matters, lest the power and influence of a few leading preachers should be broken. We have reason to be thankful, that these schemes are too apparent. They are seen through by the sensible part of our community. Others are opening their eyes, and seeking after knowledge—such knowledge as ought to be found in the hearts of all that are desirous of prospering in Methodism.

There is a curious passage, which I will just notice, upon this head:—'If we speak strictly, we do not so much expel him, as he leaves us.'

This is worthy of being debated in the conference. It is similar to their debating upon this point, 'Whether I was trying them, or they were trying me.' If this be logic among a few preachers, it is not the logic of the body of preachers, nor of the people in general. Suppose a number of criminals were tried, cast, and condemned; if these criminals were forced on board a ship, and sent to

Botany

Botany Bay, should any grave judge, with all the seriousness belonging to his office, declare, 'We do not so much expel them, as they leave us,' would the people be able to keep their gravity? If I, however, smile at such language as this, I am published through the nation as a mere trifler, and many prayers are offered to heaven for my conversion.

They add, 'Perhaps you may wonder, why we bring doctrine here, as well as discipline. But is there not a cause? Have we not reason to apprehend that he has it as much at heart to change *this* as the *other*? [Page 24, of his 'Progress of Liberty,'] he says, 'Would it not be necessary to examine that clause in our deeds, which requires every preacher to conform in his preaching to the doctrine contained in Mr. Wesley's Notes on the New Testament, and his four volumes of sermons. If the conference were to publish the Notes on the New Testament, and the four volumes of sermons, desiring the opinion of our people upon these throughout the connexion, and then make *the alterations which are considered necessary by the PEOPLE*, it would be to the honour and advantage of our cause.'—Here, it is not only intimated that the doctrine in the notes and sermons, is in some respect erroneous, but the judgment of the people, as to this matter, is exalted above the judgment of the preachers, yea, and above Mr. Wesley himself, &c. &c. &c.'—To show how unjustly the subject is represented, I will quote the passage they allude to:—

'To lay a proper foundation, would it not be necessary, for the rules of our societies and bands, to be carefully examined; and in some parts either altered or explained, that they may give no offence to the unprejudiced? And as there are a number of minutes, containing rules, both for the people and ourselves, in the yearly minutes of the conference, would it not be right to collect these into a pamphlet, and determine which of them are binding, and which of them have lost their influence? As they lie buried at present, many of them are forgotten, which are of great importance; and others continue as laws, which we can never think are binding upon us now. Would it not be necessary to examine the large minutes of the conference, and either determine to keep those rules that are binding sacred, otherwise let them be expunged? And
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let every thing that is indifferent be explained or laid aside, that our people may not reproach us, for having rules which we never attend to? Would it not be necessary to examine that clause in our deeds, which requires every preacher to conform in his preaching, to the doctrines contained in Mr. Wesley's Notes on the New Testament, and his four volumes of sermons? Is there nothing in the Notes or in the Sermons that militates against the scriptures, 'which are the only sufficient rule of our faith and practice?' The Papists are required to receive the doctrines which are taught by their priests, without examining them by the word of God. Every member of the church of England, is to receive the scriptures, as they are explained by the church. And every Methodist preacher is to mould his doctrines according to the Notes and Sermons of Mr Wesley. If the conference were to collect all the private rules published in the yearly minutes—the class and band rules—the large minutes—the Notes on the New Testament—and the four volumes of Sermons, desiring the opinion of our people upon them throughout the connexion, and then make the alterations which are considered necessary by the people at large, it would be to the honour and advantage of our cause. It would lead our friends to examine our doctrines—a thing which thousands of them have never yet done, and to compare them with the scriptures of truth. The leaders could easily collect the sense of the people upon every subject; and it could be brought regularly through leaders', quarterly, and district meetings to the conference. I expect to be reproached for hinting at this; but am conscious, it would be abundantly better for our people to know the doctrines we hold, than to go forward in *that ignorance*, which cannot be for their happiness. And would it not be for the honour of their character, to prove all things belonging to Methodism, and only hold fast that which is good, both for their faith and practice?

I have given the passage as it stands in the Progress of Liberty. Will any thing belonging to Methodism suffer, by being fairly examined? If there are laws and rules in the Minutes that are never thought of; and others that are a reproach to our connexion, would there be any harm in laying them aside? And were our people to examine
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the Notes on the New Testament, and the four volumes of Sermons, would they lose any thing by examination?—There are certain doctrines which the Methodists hold, and which Mr. Wesley was particularly warm in defending.—But if in his own Sermons and Notes there are expressions or sentences, which militate against his avowed opinions in other places, would it not be well to lay them aside.—Is the sermon called ‘The Almost Christian,’ exactly according to the scriptures? Are there no expressions in the sermon called ‘The Lord our Righteousness,’ that speak of Christ’s own personal righteousness being imputed to us? A doctrine which he objected to in many parts of his works.—Are there no passages in the sermon on Rom. viii. 1, which border upon Antinomianism!—And are there not several places in the Notes, and in the Sermons, which if taken in their literal sense, militate against the doctrines Mr. Wesley held? Have not his Calvinist opponents availed themselves of these passages, and fought our venerable father, with his own words?

In regard to the yearly and large Minutes, the class and band rules, there are so many things in them which do not refer to doctrine, that are either never thought of, or only considered as laughable, that, in my judgment, it would be better to revise and alter, than suffer our connexion to be reproached so very justly by continuing them? Were the people requested to examine every thing I mentioned, and could point out in leaders’, quarterly, and district meetings, any thing that militates against the scriptures, or the avowed doctrines of Methodism, would there be any harm in laying them aside? Would it not be for the glory of God, and the advantage of our cause, to do it?

These worthy fathers attempt to make this ridiculous by saying, ‘class meetings, quarterly and district meetings, would be turned into disputing clubs—neither preachers nor leaders would be allowed to know or judge for themselves, what doctrine they are to teach and believe, but are to be directed by the majority of the people in these particulars. Here you have one *pretty remarkable specimen* and *prominent feature* of his plan, &c.’ Pray, what has all this to do with my plan? It is a shadow they are attacking, to amuse themselves, and to keep the people from hav-

ing right views of the subject. It is impossible, without torturing the passage, to make it declare, that according to my plan, 'himself, and all his brethren in the ministry, should refer their doctrines to the discussion, and determination of their hearers, and should alter it from time to time, at their will and pleasure. A proposition, so extravagant and ridiculous, that no person would possibly have made it, who had any proper knowledge of the gospel of Christ, or of human nature, or the *uprightness, disinterestedness, fidelity, and courage* essential to the character of a *minister of Christ, and steward of the mysteries of God.*' This 'extravagant proposition,' is not mine. It is raised up by Mr. Benson to attack and conquer. Nothing I have said leads to such an absurdity. How easy it is, by putting our own ideas to a subject, to make it ridiculous, and then to blame our opponent for it. This has been the conduct of my worthy fathers in this place.

It appears, my ignorance is conspicuous in the passage they have been attacking: but more especially, in placing the head of a furious animal, at the top of the London Bull. If the Pope's 'edicts were called bulls, because they were given under his bulla or seal,' was not the edict sent to arrest me, given under the hand and seal of ten preachers? And was not the figure emblematical? Did not this Methodistical Bull foam with fury and rage against me? Was not its horns designed to push me out of the connexion!

They say, 'as to impudence, there needs no other proof of this, than his audacious treatment of the memory of Mr. Wesley; and his *repeated and ungrounded* attacks on so many of his fathers and brethren, whose characters have been irreprehensible and venerable for above half a century.' Pray have I, or these worthy fathers, treated Mr. Wesley's memory with the greatest audaciousness? They have represented him dying insolvent—published that they have had his debts to pay, out of the preachers' fund money, when they know in their consciences, he left five or six thousand pounds more in book-stock, to help the connexion with, than paid his legacies. I have not 'by repeated and ungrounded attacks,' injured my fathers and brethren. This cannot be fairly proved from any thing I have written.

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They say, 'He has been guilty of *breach of trust*, and that in a matter of the greatest importance, in that, as this Address demonstrates, he has *deceived the confidence* reposed in him by Mr. Wesley and the brethren, and has violated the engagements entered into at his admission, and at the conference after Mr. Wesley's death.

At the time of my trial, breach of trust was confined to my publishing an extract, in the title page of the London Ball, from a private letter written by Dr. Coke.—But when the Doctor became my warm opposer, the preachers could not make this a crime, as the letter was not of a nature that required secrecy. I am now charged with deceiving the confidence of Mr. Wesley. Was I not subject to Mr. Wesley, not for wrath, but for conscience sake, while he lived? And though I am represented as 'lying still, for obvious reasons,' during his life, I can assure the reader, had I then seen things in the same light as I do now, nothing would have restrained my pen. But the principal grievances we complain of, are those which have been manifest since his death. I have neither directly nor indirectly deceived the confidence of that great man. It appears, that these worthy fathers consider, if they can only drag his name into the dispute, it will supply the want of a number of arguments. It is become so very common now, that the people are not capable of being imposed on by it. When I agreed to follow the plan Mr. Wesley left us at his death, it was with the purest motives. As that plan requires us to follow the openings of divine providence, I trust, this has been my endeavour, since the year 1791.

If the fathers and brethren of that conference imagined I should not venture to oppose any measure that they might be kind enough to establish, my agreeing to follow the plan left us by Mr. Wesley, by no means required this at my hand. As an honest man, I had a right to point out to our people, the evils that threaten their destruction, and to call upon them to come forward, and help in having them removed. I have deceived the confidence of no man, in writing upon the evils that are found in our body. I know many persons think it singular, that the only travelling preacher, that ever came from Epworth, the place where Messrs. Wesleys were born, should come forward and point out a number of evils which are found in

our body, and propose a radical cure. They consider the same fountain as sending forth bitter and sweet waters.—Whatever may be thought by some on this subject, I consider it an honour to be born in the same town that gave birth to Messrs. Wesleys, and I hope I have been following the leadings of divine providence in my contracted sphere, in what I have done to bring about a redress of grievances, as Messrs. Wesleys did when they sought to reform the national church. And as they rejoiced when they were worthy to be cast out of the church, and went preaching the gospel where a door opened; so I rejoice, that I am counted worthy to be cast out of the conference for what I have done, and hope to preach wherever the Lord directs my way.

They say, ‘As to *lies*, or uttering *slanders or untruths*, whether he knew them to be such or not, this is also but too amply proved in this publication, as it was also at the conference, before one hundred and fifty witnesses.—If this was proved so well in the conference, why have the preachers refused to publish the account? No person can suppose it was out of tenderness to me, but rather from another cause. If this pamphlet prove me a liar in so many instances, it is a little singular, that they cannot be made out, when their declarations are properly examined.

They say, ‘Some of you, however, are of opinion, that he is sincere, and means well in all the steps he has taken, having no intention of making a division among the people. We confess, we thought so ourselves till lately, and therefore have been the less severe upon him. But we now see cause to alter our judgment, and that for the following reasons :

1. If he be sincere, and believe himself, what he publishes to the world, respecting the *corruption, oppression, and tyrannical nature* of our plan, and the *dishonesty, and knavery* of our conduct, why does he seek so earnestly to labour in connexion with us, &c.

2. ‘If he mean well, and have no intention to make a division in the societies, why does he use such *art* to render himself popular, and attach a party to himself, and that among the trustees and preachers, as well as people, not in the least regarding the strife, contention, and subsequent convulsion this may make in the societies? That he may induce the people to favour him, he compliments them on their

their good sense, and tells them, 'It is *their* cause he is pleading, and that on that account he is expelled, &c.'—His judgment of the trustees and of their power, you are, some of you at least, no strangers to, &c. What business had he, a young, unexperienced stripling, to meddle either with the trustees at Bristol, or in London. &c.—But it is not among the people and trustees only, but among the preachers also, that he endeavours to gain a party to himself. For this purpose, he labours to excite the envy of the younger preachers against their senior brethren.—They want to make it out, that in the passages quoted from my pamphlets upon dishonesty, &c. that I most certainly allude to the senior brethren, and them *only*.—

'Now can he suppose they are so ignorant, or so thoughtless, as to attach themselves to a man, who thus undeservedly, and without so much as a shadow of a reason, reproaches them? &c. What Mr. K——'s intentions are in all this, we apprehend, is sufficiently apparent. He is manifestly doing his utmost to make divisions; nor can his proceedings, in the nature of things, have any other tendency, &c.'

Upon this passage let us remark, 1. I have not represented the preachers in general, in the *horrid light* this passage holds out. That is, as a 'set of knaves and tyrants.' Do 'I seek earnestly to labour in connexion with the preachers' upon any other ground than a radical reform?—If they would establish a plan, calculated to satisfy the people, and suffer them to know how their own affairs are managed, this would induce me to wish to live and die with them. It is possible for me to 'mean well,' and at the same time, to plead for a redress of grievances. If any thing has made me popular, it is not my 'art,' but the steps the conference, and a few leading preachers since that time, have taken, which have made me so. I can assure the preachers, that I am not striving to divide the societies.—I should infinitely prefer an union upon good grounds.—And if that could be established, I would cheerfully retire into a private situation, rather than be an hindrance to such an union.

2. I have not basely complimented the people to get them on my side. It is on their account that I suffer, whether the preachers will believe it or not. Had I kept out of their view the evils that are found in the connexion, my

my plan might have been retained. The sensible part of the connexion see this, and are resolved to take such steps as may convince the leading preachers, that when they act unjustly in expelling one of their body for declaring the truth, they will support the injured, as far as the gospel directs. If these fathers in the gospel, could get the people to take part with them, and not stoop to examine matters, this would lead them to renounce me, and to cease seeking a redress of grievances. But, as good Mr. Pawson says, 'The reign of popery is too far over and gone,' for any thing of this nature to be imposed on the Methodists.

3. Many of the old trustees saw farther than a number of the people. They beheld too much *priestly power and influence*, creeping into our connexion. When a struggle was made to get all the chapels into the hands of the preachers, they dreaded the consequences, and many of them withstood every effort that was made to bring them to adopt the plan that was proposed. Mr. Wesley, from the best of motives, might wish the trustees to give up their power to the conference, but many of the trustees could not be reconciled to this measure, and therefore they refused to comply with the proposal.

2. The trustees in most places, who have opposed the sacrament and the service in church hours, have not done it so much out of *opposition to the people*, as to *check the growing influence* of the preachers. They saw, or thought they saw, priestly pride behind the scheme, and determined to check it in the bud.

3. If the London trustees had followed the most excellent way, perhaps they would not have entered into a law-suit. But the preachers were the moving cause of that suit. They laid the foundation, and the trustees availed themselves of the laws of their country, when they saw their rights invaded. There appears an over-ruling providence in permitting that suit. As it has *demonstrated*, that all the houses are in the hands of the trustees. They are the guardians of the rights of the people. The preachers have no power over the houses but by the sufferance of the trustees.

4. No persons in the world can justify the conduct of the Newcastle trustees. A second deed was made for the Orphan-house, about twenty years after it was built. This deed was not registered in chancery. Mr. Wesley made a
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third deed, and appointed trustees, a little before his death. Several of the old trustees were dissatisfied at Mr. Cownley's giving the sacrament at Pyker, two miles from Newcastle. One of them, being an attorney, found out that the second deed was not valid, and in consequence of this, the last, which Mr. Wesley made a little before his death, was good for nothing. A gentleman, who was trustee for the first deed, was then alive in London. The attorney and his friends, plotted secretly, got a new deed made, and had it signed over to them, by the gentleman in London. This transaction being ripened, was made known to the people on the 5th of November, 1792. By this measure, two deeds were set aside, and the trustees Mr. Wesley had appointed, were supplanted. Can any person justify the steps which were taken to usurp the trust of the Orphan-house? Have I used too strong expressions on this head, in reprobating that measure?

5. When I opposed the measures of the trustees in London, Bristol, Newcastle, &c. it was because I thought they were acting against the rights and liberties of the people. Undue power, exercised by any part of our body, has been, and still is, the object of my attack. And whatever attempts Mr. Benson uses to make me inconsistent on this head, every impartial reader, on examining my pamphlets, will perceive, that I have invariably opposed, according to my ability, every thing that was calculated, in *either trustees or preachers*, to oppress the people.

6. To prove the truth of this assertion, I shall quote a passage from the Progress of Liberty, upon the subject:—
 'Preachers, trustees, leaders, and stewards, in a religious point of view, are no more than brethren to the private members. They are more than brethren in one point of view: they are their servants for Christ's sake.—In this sense we dare not call any person our Master, but Christ, and we are all brethren in him: this gives every society, let its members be many or few, an unalienable right to worship God as they please. Every society in our connexion has a right to determine, what hours are most suitable for public worship?—where and how the sacrament shall be administered, &c. &c. And a majority in every society ought always to be fairly obtained, before any thing of importance is determined. As no society is so large but it may assemble in the place appointed for public

public worship, the fairest and most equitable way of knowing the minds of the people, would be by stating the subject properly, not endeavouring to bias their judgment any way, and then leaving them at *full liberty* to vote which way they please.

‘The votes could not be so well collected by the leaders: though in some cases this might be submitted to, when the whole society could not assemble: if the majority should determine for service in church hours—the sacrament of the Lord’s supper—baptism—and burial of the dead, by our own preachers, it would be a sin in the sight of God to hinder them from enjoying their privileges. No trustees, stewards, leaders, or even preachers, could prevent them, without taking the place of Christ, and lording it over God’s heritage. We have all an equal right to vote in these matters, as we are all redeemed by Christ, and have all a soul to save, equally precious in the sight of God, with the souls of our trustee-brethren. The minority have always a right to do as they please: if they can submit, saying, *The will of the Lord be done*, all will be well. If they cannot, they may worship in church hours, receive the sacrament, &c. &c. as they have done: and in every thing else be united to their brethren in the bonds of the gospel. If the conference, a body of trustees, or any person or number of persons, prevent a society from having the privilege of determining these matters, it is *tyranny on their part, and oppression to the people.*’

Had Mr. Benson quoted this passage at full length, he would have placed my sentiments fairly before the people. But taking detached parts from different pamphlets, written on different occasions, and placing them before the people in the manner he has done, is far from acting the part of a fair opponent. If Mr. Benson and his brethren, could work upon the passions of the trustees, and get them on their side, it would be a great acquisition. But the trustees are wiser than to be led into a snare that would, in the end, prove hurtful to the cause of Methodism.—— I would still advise the people to converse freely with leaders, trustees, and stewards on the subjects alluded to, and they will hear from many of them, such narratives, as will sufficiently convince them, that I have not exaggerated, in the accounts published in my pamphlets.

It is very curious, how these worthy fathers can make it out, that all the charges respecting swindling, are only applicable to the young preachers.—I am represented as endeavouring to stir them up to envy the old preachers their situations. Having signed my expulsion at the sacrament table (I mean those that were at the last conference) how can they recede from that act, so necessary for the welfare of the people? They are supposed not to be 'so ignorant or thoughtless to attach themselves to a man, who has undeservedly, and without so much as the shadow of a reason, reproached them.' Why do they pursue this way to guard the young preachers? Would not truth prevail on them more than this sophistry? If the young preachers wish to have the confidence of the people, they will not suffer the *golden chain* of the rules of the preachers' fund, to bind them from thinking and acting as ministers of Christ. Should they join the few that govern, to support their measures, and lose the confidence of the people by it, they may have to grapple with many things, that will prevent their future usefulness. I hope they will look beyond the present year, and consider the state the Methodist connexion may be in, in a few months or years. The prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself, while the simple pass on and are punished.

A snare is laid for the preachers throughout the connexion, by a letter from the Manchester district meeting. The following is an exact copy of it:

'MANCHESTER, Dec. 2, 1796.

'Very dear Brethren,

"You will see by these minutes, that we have been under the disagreeable necessity of calling a district meeting; at which, among other things, it has been said, that some assert 'there are many of the preachers who do not approve of the conference rules or laws; nor of the power vested in the conference.'—On this diversity of sentiment, some think our present uneasiness is founded.

'We are of opinion, that this matter ought to be put out of doubt; and therefore we wish you to use what means you think best to get the judgment of every preacher in your district on these two important points. When you have

have received their unequivocal sentiments, be kind enough to send them to Mr. PAWSON, that when all come to hand, he may publish them to the connexion.

‘ We are your affectionate Brethren,

‘ Signed in behalf of the Meeting,

‘ A. MATHER.

‘ T. TAYLOR.’

‘ P. S. We entreat you to do this without delay.’

On this letter let us remark, 1. By what authority do these brethren break the rules of the last conference, in printing and publishing their minutes with this letter?

2. Have they a right to request the preachers to give their ‘ unequivocal sentiments’ upon this subject, before the next conference?—Is not this measure a proof, that a few leading preachers are grasping after dominion over the rest of their brethren?

3. If the preachers comply, what shall they write?—Their own free sentiments, or disguise their views, in words of a double meaning? If they say they approve of all the laws and rules of the conference, and of the power the preachers exercise, will not the people consider them as acting under the influence of a *few men* against their interests? And will not this wean the hearts of sensible people from them? If they write freely upon the subject, will they not give offence to the ruling party? May not this step cause them to be suspected, and be a means of injuring them in future?

4. If Mr. Pawson receive the ‘ unequivocal sentiments’ of the preachers, will he be obliged to publish them?—Will he not rather be at liberty to circulate those that are the most favourable to his views, and either not mention the others, or do it in a way that will prevent their sentiments from being known?

5. Is it possible for any real good to arise out of this scheme? If the preachers declare themselves of one mind in this matter, and all approve of the rules and laws of the conference, will not sensible people suppose they have entered

tered into a combination against them? Will not this increase jealousy, and hasten division and tumult? If their sentiments considerably vary, will not this be attended with dispute and altercation among themselves? If mutilated accounts of what they write be published, will not this occasion a number of things painful and distressing to the preachers?

6. In whatever light this letter is viewed, it holds out snares to preachers, and is calculated to injure the connexion. It will be happy for those preachers, who take no notice of it, but continue their circuits, without paying undue homage to any number of men, *that may act as a self-created head over them.*

The following is a curious passage:—‘ We beg leave to ask, whom they would wish the connexion to be governed by? the *fathers or the children*? If by the fathers, whether by those who have been employed in the work from the beginning, and have had the experience of thirty or forty years, or those, that, like him, are only of yesterday.— But how can these senior brethren, he speaks of, be said to govern the connexion, when it is well known they have wished, for three or four years past, to have a government of some kind established, as a *dernier resort*, in the intervals of conference, but have not been able to obtain it, the younger brethren, who are more in number, always carrying the point against them.’

Upon this passage let us remark, 1. I have shown in a former number, that the present Methodist preachers are not the fathers of the people. Perhaps not of more than one tenth of them. And supposing they were, since the connexion is come to maturity, they have no right to rule without being appointed by the people. The Pope is called papa, or father, and usurps authority over the people at large.— It is a little singular, that Methodist preachers should follow popish maxims, and wish, by calling themselves the fathers of the people, to govern them without their consent.

2. These worthy fathers, that have travelled thirty or forty years, consider themselves as qualified to govern, abundantly better than those like me, ‘ of yesterday,’ who have only travelled about twelve years. Fathers generally have a good opinion of their own abilities. Perhaps some that have not travelled half so long, may be as capable of governing

governing as themselves. But who requires rulers and governors in the church, to take the place of Christ, and exercise dominion over the people? As this is extremely unnecessary, so it is absurd, in the highest degree.—— Every district may manage its own affairs till the conference return. And to create offices in the church, unknown in the scriptures, is dangerous to vital religion. Jesus Christ says, we have only himself for our Master. We are all brethren.

3. Here we have an open confession, that for three or four years, these worthy fathers have been seeking to establish a government, as ‘a dernier resort,’ to exercise authority over the preachers and people, from conference to conference. Would they have acknowledged this two years ago? If they have been seeking this, under different forms, it is happy for the connexion that they have not found it. Their younger brethren being more in number, have prevented their designs. We supposed they wanted to reign as princes in our Israel, and therefore prevented the evil.

4. Have not Messrs. Mather, Pawson, and Benson for many years, fixed themselves, according to their own pleasure, without the people being consulted? Are they not rich in comparison of many, or most of their brethren? And are there not a number of preachers, equally qualified for large, rich circuits, that have grieved to see themselves slighted or neglected? Cannot these worthy fathers recollect, that many hints of this nature have been thrown out by different preachers, and by the people in many places? If these things have not reached their ears, others have heard complaints of this nature, and been grieved on account of them.

Perhaps there is not a part in the pamphlet, which ought to be more execrated, than the following quotation:

‘As to his insinuations respecting ourselves, we despise, and should take no notice of them, but for the sake of the people, whose suspicions and prejudices they are intended to excite; we would observe, we care not how much ‘every class of readers,’ whether of Thomas Paine’s or Alexander Kilham’s mushroom-productions, or of the equally *well-meant*, though less noticed efforts of that *pigmy tribe of scribblers*, of which Salford, Ashton, and the neighbourhood have been so prolific of late.——We care not, we say, how

how much they 'converse with the trustees, stewards, and leaders of our societies.' All, we are well assured, save the *professed disciples of Thomas Paine*, will bear witness to the integrity, and upright conduct of the Methodist preachers.——One thing, however, may comfort us, and that is, that there is little likelihood of his drawing off any, but those whose views accord with his own in politics as well as religion, and we are not assured but it will be abundantly best for the whole connexion, that persons of this description should leave us. Some of them having caught Mr. K——'s spirit, and imbibed his *levelling principles*, for some time have been, and, we have reason to believe, would continue to be disturbers of the body, and promoters of strife and contention, and that about matters of no moment, or such as might easily be regulated in another and more peaceable way.

Upon this passage let us remark, 1. What has our plan to do with the politics of the nation? And why have they dragged in Mr. Paine, but to make the people fear lest we should be dangerous persons to countenance? Is not this attack extremely unkind, not to say unchristian?

2. I can positively contradict this assertion,—'All but the professed disciples of Thomas Paine, will bear witness to the integrity and upright conduct of the Methodist preachers.' There are thousands in our connexion, that are no more disciples of Thomas Paine, than Messrs. Mather, Pawson, and Benson, who are as warm in opposing the undue power and influence of the Methodist preachers, as any other class of men in our body. They question the integrity and uprightness of the preachers as much or more, than others do of a different sentiment; and what is more strange, these worthy fathers know it is so.

3. My 'levelling principles,' it is true, would banish the idea of Methodistical bishops—executive heads—building committees of preachers, and bring Methodism equal to primitive christianity, in every point were it possible. And the persons who have 'imbibed my spirit,' are aiming at the same end.

4. It seems a dubious case, whether it would not be best for persons of this description to leave us. Perhaps it would be dangerous to put them away. If they could be provoked to retire, then all things might go on as usual, unless others were to rise up and imbibe their spirit.

5. The matters we contend for, are represented of 'no moment.' Is it of no moment for the preachers to have the power and influence they possess, as it is described at the beginning of this answer? If the peace and prosperity of a large part of our body be of no moment, then this assertion is true. But if the welfare and happiness of thousands—of the greatest part of the connexion, be of moment, it is certainly necessary to contend lawfully for the privileges of the people.

6. It is easier to call my pamphlets 'mushroom-productions,' and the Manchester, Salford, Ashton, &c. friends 'a pigmy tribe of scribblers,' than to answer what we have published. It is not always men of learning and renown, that do the most good to their fellow creatures.

7. We never wished a 'total alteration of our doctrine, and discipline.' We only wish those laws and rules that are contrary to the scriptures, and the rights of the people, to be in a 'revolutionary state.' Then, perhaps, in due time, they would be renounced, and others established, according to the direction of scriptures. Representing us as wanting a 'total change of doctrine and discipline,' may affect weak minds, but the falsity of the opinion is too glaring to be admitted, by those who have candidly read what we have published.

If the following words could be depended on, it would be happy for our people:—'We are bold to say, and you may depend upon it, that the conference are disposed to give you, and the whole body, all the satisfaction that can reasonably be desired, respecting every part of our economy.'

Was not this declaration made use of to the delegates last conference? And yet, were ever laws enacted more arbitrary, and more oppressive than the preachers made at that time? Is it not reasonable that delegates should attend, both district meetings and the conference, and would not this give satisfaction, were they allowed to act in union with the preachers? Can their bold assertion be true, or the people depend on it, while they use every scheme in their power, to have secret district meetings, and a secret conference?

There is something very artful in the following expressions: 'We shall, as heretofore—at the recommendation of the leaders, or a majority of them, nominate persons to take

take accounts of all the weekly and quarterly receipts and disbursements. We shall admit, from time to time, to act as local preachers, those whom the leaders and stewards, or local preachers, name and recommend. As heretofore, they will receive any address, in any circuit or district, by word or writing, from any trustees, leaders, stewards, local preachers, or even private members of a district.—— Here, the case of any person that has already been an approved local preacher, and proposes to travel, and is properly recommended, suppose by a majority of the leaders or local preachers of a society or circuit, where he resides, shall be considered, that if he be judged called, and qualified for the work, he may be mentioned at the conference. Now the general meeting of the conference, as well as the particular one of the districts, will always be open to the addresses and applications of any individual trustee, leader, steward, local preacher, or private member, as well as to any number of each, and due attention, we believe, will be paid to such addresses or applications.'

Have the conference made any laws to bind the preachers to act according to these declarations? or will they make laws to bind themselves on this head? Have they heretofore appointed leaders and stewards, by the concurrence of a majority of the leaders and stewards of the places where such appointments took place? If they receive addresses, &c. from leaders, &c. as heretofore, will they not also burn and destroy them as *heretofore*?——If a preacher be ever so well recommended to a district meeting, do they not reserve a power to accept or reject him in the conference, when he is recommended there?——Is there any thing like positive law in this matter? Is it not designed to impose upon the people, as though they had pursued this plan, when it is known they have acted contrary to it in a thousand instances?—Instances which are well known in a vast number of circuits.

Yet these worthy fathers ask, 'what can you object to this? What is there *unreasonable* or *unscriptural* in this plan of proceeding; wherein can it be altered for the better? If you say, it is liable to abuse, we own it. But we ask, what is not? Is there—or was there ever—or can there be any plan or system, civil or religious, which is not, or has not been liable to abuse? Is not the system of christianity,

tianity—is not the work of God himself, whether in nature or in grace, liable to abuse, and is it not abused daily? Was not the economy of heaven itself abused, and that by angels? All that we can do, dear brethren, is to guard against abuses of every kind, as far as human prudence or foresight can go, or to remedy them when they occur.—This we have done from year to year, and, by the help of God, purpose to continue to do. And in this we desire both your prayers and advice, from time to time.’

On this passage let us remark, 1. This plan which they allude to, is not established by positive law. The preachers can set it aside when they please. A great number of them hardly ever attend to it. When they do, it is not of necessity but of choice.

2. The system I have described in the beginning of this Answer, exists in all its force. And it is both ‘unreasonable and unscriptural.’

3. It must either be altered for a better, or Methodism will soon be at (what Mr. Rodda calls) its *ne plus ultra*—its final end.

4. If the best of systems have been abused by angels and men, is it reasonable to suppose, that Methodist preachers are exalted above both, and on a bad system can act up rightly? If the preachers, on the system we oppose were to act in every thing according to the scriptures, we might justly suppose them to be more than men—if not more than angels?

5. Do the preachers endeavour ‘to remedy from year to year’ what is wrong? or do they keep adding more oppressive laws and rules to those which exist, to the great injury of the rights of the people?

Having gone through the pamphlet, and noticed most of the parts, which are *worthy of observation*, I shall conclude, with a few observations:

Observe 1. Messrs. Mather, &c. hint at my obscure situation, and the circumstances attending it. Perhaps was equal to what our blessed Redeemer and his apostles were blessed with.—Born of ‘pious and honest parents’ in the same town that gave birth to Mr. Wesley, is to me a source of thankfulness, to the God of my mercies. Had I set myself up for a gentleman, and acted out of character, this might have been alledged as a crime against me.—

I apprehend

I apprehend, that the birth of my opponents, and their early situations in life, were not superior to mine. Was it so with any of the three that appear to reflect on me on this account? It is not birth, nor situation in early life, that are so much to be noticed, as the improvement we make in our different spheres afterwards.

2. I am represented as having been of little or no use to the connexion. In a private letter, Mr. Pawson made it out, that I had been instrumental, with the help of a number of colleagues, of adding one hundred and ten to the society. But here he has reduced the number to thirty. About fifteen preachers added this number to the society in 11 or 12 years. Two for each person. Does not Mr. Pawson in some of his discourses inform his hearers, that a soul is worth a thousand worlds. Now, if I have been instrumental in converting two persons, is not this acquisition of as much value as two thousand worlds? But does Mr. Pawson argue fairly on the subject? Does he suppose that none died in the 11 years he alludes to? Or that none left the Methodists and joined the Dissenters? Or that none which we found in the class-papers, were put out of connexion for their immoral conduct? Or that none left the society in Newcastle on account of Mr. Cownley's giving the sacrament? Or that a few left on account of my writing the *Progress of Liberty*?

If these were numbered, they would make the thirty several hundreds. Mr. Pawson, with a sneer, may say, Judge then of the usefulness of those who are so much his inferiors, and then say, where have all the people in the connexion come from? Who has begotten me these? (See the 101st and 102d pages of the Monitor.)

3. They represent me as 'ruining the cause of God.'—That the progress of strife and contention was such, in my last circuit and in the neighbourhood, as you can only have an 'imperfect idea of them, in comparison of what you would have, had you been in those parts, or had you heard the affecting accounts given of them by Mr. Hunter.' Now, I call this hearsay evidence. Mr. Hunter praised both the *Progress of Liberty* and the Newcastle Address, till he learned the sentiments of the leading preachers; and as he is nearly at his journey's end, he thought it right to submit to their judgment, and enter his protest against me.

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The violent opposition of the London preachers and others, was the cause of any thing particularly affecting.

And I am bold to affirm, that Alnwick circuit, and the circuits in that neighbourhood, were very far from being in the state these preachers have represented them, on my account, or on any other account. Though enquiry, strife, disputes, divisions, &c. &c. are laid to my account, yet I am fully persuaded, every thinking person will trace them to another source; and we may be allowed to prophesy, that they will never have an end, until the preachers will adopt a more excellent plan.

Mr. Benson may declare, 'I have opened and raked up sinks repeatedly, and to the very bottom.'—That I 'tear limb from limb the members of the mystical body of the Lord—leave them bleeding to death—cover the ground with the dislocated and fractured bones—their mangled flesh, and quivering members.'

These expressions are more calculated to make a butcher sick, than to enlighten the minds of the followers of Christ. If Mr. Benson considered his audience, he would not make use of such low metaphors in his preaching, as he frequently does; and he would carefully avoid it in writing.

Mr. Thomas Taylor, who now is a violent opposer of me and my friends, did once write the sentiments of his heart, when himself, and a number of his brethren, were opposed and persecuted.

I shall beg leave to quote a passage or two from his work, and leave the reader to apply them:—'As for giving offence, we cannot help that: we know the carnal mind is enmity against God; and so is the friendship of this world. The messages the prophets were charged with, are often stiled *burdens*, because they were calculated to give offence, yet they were charged to be faithful in delivering them. Deut. iv. 2. and x. 30. Rev. xxii. 18, 19.—Jer. i. 7. Ezek. xxxiii. 1, 10. Did not our Lord give offence both in life and doctrine? Did he not say, I am come to send fire on the earth? Yet he was holy, harmless, and undefiled; and in his mouth was no guile. Did not his apostles give offence? And who were offended more than the Jews: especially their rulers and teachers? Did not the primitive christians give offence? As likewise the

Waldenses

Waldenses and Albigenes, those first reformers from popery and superstition. Did not Luther and the rest of the reformers give offence? Did not the non-conformists give offence; yea, even Mr. Wesley's ancestors, his great grand father, Bartholomew Wesley; his grand father, John Wesley, and his grand father by his mother, Dr. Anesley; did not these men give offence to church bigots, for which they suffered the spoiling of their goods, yea, moreover, bonds and imprisonments?—And finally, I ask, who has given greater offence in this age, than Mr. Wesley himself?

‘I would say to all the Methodists—beware of a persecuting spirit; and beware of every thing that wears the appearance of compulsion! It strongly indicates, that if such had bonds and imprisonments at their command, they would put them in force against such as differ from them. Besides, in all such cases, violent opposition always defeats its own intention. No one acts freely, contrary to the judgment he has formed of a thing; and remember, where the Spirit of the Lord is, **THERE IS LIBERTY.**’ Has Mr. Taylor forgotten his own words?

4. Mr. Pawson declares, ‘that in Mr. Rider’s house, at Manchester Conference, a very respectable person, of well known veracity, said, I declared, if I were one of the committee, I would make short work of it! For I would give the trustees every thing they asked, and yet I would give them nothing: for I would express myself so, that every sentence should be capable of a double meaning, and I would deceive them all.’

This charge is so notoriously false, that such a vile sentiment never entered into my heart. And I call upon Mr. Pawson, to bring forward his ‘woman of veracity,’ and take her oath of it, if she dare, in the presence of that God, who will soon be both her judge and mine. I deny the charge *in toto*, and call for substantial witness to prove it. If Mr. Pawson supposes that he can make ‘my name sink through the nation,’ by such means as this, he will find himself mistaken.

It is exceedingly mortifying to him and others, to see the trustees friendly to me in many places. But this snare, designed to entangle them, shall be broken, and they shall be delivered. He may write to his friends, as he did to Mr. W——, in Liverpool, ‘You may depend on it,
that

that cause, which wants so much lying, flandering, backbiting, evil-speaking, misrepresentation, &c. &c. &c.— as I am infallibly certain that he and his friends are guilty of, to support it, will not, cannot stand long.' How easy it would be to retort these words upon himself and his friends! And it would be possible to add, 'I am infallibly certain' it is so. But would this carry any conviction of any thing farther, than an infallible proof of presumption and insolence. If I be guilty of all the evils he names, I hope my friends cannot be charged with them.

As a presumptive proof, that this 'woman of veracity,' is a false accuser, I will insert the paper I drew up as a protest against such duplicity, which was signed by fifty seven preachers, and given to Mr. Bradford. It was at the same conference, and about the same time, that she declares she heard me deliver the words which Mr Pawson has published.

'Honoured Fathers and Brethren,

'We are *extremely* sorry, that any thing should cause us to differ in sentiment from a majority of the conference. We are *constrained* to do it, from a principle of truth and honesty. It appears to us, that no rule made in this house should be capable of bearing a double meaning. We are sorry to find an *appearance* of duplicity in some of our rules. We exceedingly object to the addition which is made to the first proposition of reconciliation, unless you add to it Messrs. Thompson, Benson, and Bradburn's explanation of the word *separation*. If this be not granted, we jointly enter our protest against that, and every other rule of the same nature. And intreat the preachers met in conference, to respect their character, by making their rules so explicit that no person may misunderstand them.

'We are your affectionate brethren in the gospel, &c.'

Now, I appeal to every reasonable person, whether it is probable, that I should draw up this paper, and get it signed by fifty-seven preachers, at the hazard of frowns and rebuffs from the leading preachers, and on the same day, or near the same day, make use of the detestable words that
are

are palmed upon me? If this 'woman of veracity,' come forward, and take her oath, it will not do, unless she can bring as strong evidence of my guilt, as this paper does of my innocence in this matter.

5. If Messrs. Mather, &c. come forward again, let them meet our principles and confute them—if they can. But they must remember, nothing but quoting *positive laws*, can overturn what we declare to be the state of our affairs, as it alludes to the things we oppose. Saying, it is 'our general custom,' or 'our rule,' is nothing, unless there be law to bind. If the controversy be confined to *principles*, it will soon be ended. A few pages will be sufficient to make this matter clear.

6. The latter part of their pamphlet, I cordially agree to, and wish it may be engraven on all our hearts. Whatever any person thinks to the contrary, I would a thousand times sooner see the Methodists united, on a liberal plan, than behold them divided in sentiments and affections. Or than see the connexion rent in twain. If this would be accomplished, by my retiring into obscurity, or leaving Europe, I would cheerfully submit to it, for the general good.

May that God, that led Israel through the wilderness, become our defence, and may he lead us into such a blessed union with himself, and each other, that the gates of hell may never prevail against us!

A. KILHAM.

SALTORD, MANCHESTER, 16th Dec. 1796.

THE HISTORY OF THE
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FROM THE FOUNDATION
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THE

Methodist Monitor.

Several of my friends earnestly intreat me to comply with Mr. Pawson's *particular request*, and to place for a Motto, the passage of scripture he mentions, with the next verse. I should never have thought of such a Motto, had not our worthy friend recommended it:

"For I have heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, *say they*, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, *saying*, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we will take our revenge on him. But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper. *their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.*"

Jeremiah xx. 10, 11.

Robinson's Preface to the Third Volume of Saurin's Sermons.

(Continued from Page 127.)

A Second character of imperfection is *the employing of great means to obtain no valuable end.*—Whatever end the author of christianity had in view, it is beyond a doubt, he hath employed great means to effect it. To use the language of a prophet, he hath *spoken the heavens, and*
X *the*

the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, Hag. ii. 6, 7.—
 When *the desire of all nations* came, universal nature felt his approach, and preternatural displays of wisdom, power, and goodness, have ever attended his steps. The most valuable ends were answered by his coming. Conviction followed his preaching; and truths, till then shut up in the counsels of God, were actually put into the possession of finite minds. A general manumission followed his meritorious death, and the earth resounded with the praises of a spiritual deliverer, who had set the sons of bondage free. The laws of his empire were published, and all his subjects were happy in obeying them. *In his days the righteous flourished*, and on his plan, abundance of peace would have continued as long as the moon endured, Psal. lxxii. 7.—
 Plenty of instruction, liberty to examine it, and peace in obeying it, these were ends worthy of the great means used to obtain them.

Let us for a moment suppose a subversion of the seventy-second psalm, from whence I have borrowed these ideas; let us imagine *the kings of Tarshish and of the isles bringing presents*, not to express their homage to Christ; but to purchase that dominion over the consciences of mankind, which belongs to Jesus Christ: let us suppose the boundless wisdom of the gospel, and the innumerable ideas of inspired men concerning it, shrivelled up into the narrow compass of one human creed; let us suppose liberty of thought taken away; and the peace of the world interrupted by the introduction and support of bold usurpations, dry ceremonies, cant phrases, and puerile inventions; in this supposed case, the history of great means remains, the worthy ends to be answered by them are taken away, and they, who should thus deprive mankind of the end of the sacred code, would charge themselves with the necessary obligation of accounting for this character of imperfection. Ye prophets and apostles! ye ambassadors of Christ! *How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us? Lo! certainly in vain made he it, the pen of the scribe is in vain!* Jer. viii. 8. Precarious wisdom, that must not be questioned! useless books, which must not be examined! vain legislation, that either cannot be obeyed, or ruins him who obeys it!

All the ends, that can be obtained by human modifications of divine revelation, can never compensate for the

loss of that dignity, which the perfection of the system, as God gave it, acquires to him; nor can it indemnify man for the loss of that spontaneity, which is the essence of every effort, that merits the name of human, and without which virtue itself is nothing but a name. Must we destroy the man to make the christian? What is there in a scholastic honour, what is an ecclesiastical emolument, what is an archiepiscopal throne, to indemnify for these losses?—Jesus Christ gave his life a ransom for men, not to empower them to enjoy these momentary distinctions; these are far inferior to the noble ends of his coming: the honour of God and the gospel at large; the disinterested exercise of mental abilities, assimilating the free-born soul to its benevolent God; a copartnership with Christ in promoting the universal felicity of all mankind; these—these are ends of religion worthy of the blood of Jesus, and deserving the sacrifice of whatever is called great among men.

Thirdly, the destruction of the end by the use of the means employed to obtain it, is another character of imperfection. St. Paul calls christianity *unity*, Eph. iv. 3, &c. He denominates it the unity of the Spirit, on account of its Author, object, and end. God, the Supreme Spirit, is the Author of it, the spirits, or souls of men are the object, and the spirituality of human souls, that is, the perfection, of which finite spirits are capable, is the end of it. The gospel proposes the reunion of men divided by sin, first to God, and then to one another, and in order to effect it, reveals a religion, which teaches *one God, one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, one rule of faith, one object of hope*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. and, lest we should imagine this revelation to admit of no variety, we are told, *Grace is given to every one according to the proportional measure of the gift of christianity*. Each believer is therefore exhorted to speak the truth in love, to walk with all lowliness, meekness, and long suffering, and to forbear another in love. Here is a character of perfection, for these means employed to unite mankind are productive of union, the end of the means.

Should men take up the gospel in this simplicity: and, accommodating it to their own imaginary superior wisdom, or to their own secular purposes, should they explain this union so as to suit their designs, and employ means to produce

produce it; and should they denominate their system christianity, it would certainly be, in spite of its name, a christianity marked with the imperfection of its authors; for in the christian religion, in the thing itself, and not in its appellation, shines the glorious character of perfection.

The christian religion unites mankind. By what common bond does it propose to do so?—By love. This is a bond of perfectness—a most perfect bond. This is practicable, and productive of every desirable end, and the more we study human nature, the more fully shall we be convinced, that we cannot imagine any religion to do more, nor need we desire more, for this answers every end of being religious. Had Jesus Christ formed his church on a sentimental plan, he must have employed many means, which he has not employed, and he must have omitted many directions, which he has given. One of his means of uniting mankind is contained in this direction—*Search the scriptures, and call no man your master upon earth*; that is to say, exercise your very different abilities, assisted by very different degrees of aid, in periods of very different duration, and form your own notions of the doctrines contained in the scriptures. Is not this injunction destructive of a sentimental union? Place ten thousand spectators in several circles round a statue erected on a spacious plain, bid some look at it through magnifying glasses, others through common spectacles, some with keen naked eyes, others with weak diseased eyes, each on a point of each circle different from that where another stands, and all receiving the picture of the object in the eye by different reflections and refractions of the rays of light, and say, will not a command to look destroy the idea of sentimental union; and, if the establishment of an exact union of sentiment be the end, will not looking, the mean appointed to obtain it, actually destroy it, and would not such a projector of uniformity mark his system with imperfection?

Had Jesus Christ formed his church on the plan of a ceremonial union, or on that of a professional union, it is easy to see, the same reasoning might be applied to the laws of such a legislator would counteract and destroy one another, and a system so unconnected would discover the

the imperfection of its author, and provide for the ruin of itself.

These principles being allowed, we proceed to examine the doctrines of christianity, as they are presented to an inquisitive man, entirely at liberty to choose his religion, by our different churches in their several creeds. The church of Rome lays before me the the decisions of the council of Trent ; the Lutheran church the confession of Augsborg ; one nation gives me one account of christianity, another a different account of it, a third contradicts the other two, and no two creeds agree. The difference of these systems obliges me to allow, they could not all proceed from any one person, and much less could they all proceed from such a person, as all christians affirm Jesus Christ to be. I am driven, then, to examine his account of his own religion contained in the allowed standard book, to which they all appeal, and here I find, or think I find, a right of reduction, that removes all those suspicions, which variety in human creeds had excited in my mind concerning the truth of christianity.

The doctrines of christianity, I presume to guess, according to the usual sense of the phrase, are divisible into two classes. The first contains the principal truths, the pure genuine theology of Jesus Christ, essential to the system, and in which all christians in our various communities agree. The other class consists of those less important propositions, which are meant to serve as explications of the principal truths. The first is the matter of our holy religion, the last is our conception of the manner of its operation. In the first we all agree, in the last our benevolent religion, constructed on principles of analogy, proportion, and perfection, both enjoys and empowers us to agree to differ. The first is the light of the world, the last, our sentiments on its nature, or our distribution of its effects.

In general each church calls its own creed a system of christianity, a body of christian doctrine, and perhaps not improperly : but then each divine ought to distinguish that part of his system, which is pure revelation, and so stands confessedly the doctrine of Jesus Christ, from that other part, which is human explication, and so may be either true or false, clear or obscure, presumptive or demonstra-

tive, according to the abilities of the exp'ainer, who compiled the creed. Without this distinction, we may incorporate all our opinions with the infallible revelations of heaven, we may imagine each article of our belief essential to christianity itself, we may subjoin a human codicil to a divine testament, and attribute equal authenticity to both, we may account a proposition confirmed by a synodical seal as fully authenticated, as a truth confirmed by an apostolical miracle, and so we may bring ourselves to rank a conscientious disciple of Christ, who denies the necessity of episcopal ordination, with a brazen disciple of the devil, who denies the truth of revelation, and pretends to doubt the being of a God.

But here, I feel again the force of that observation, with which this preface begins. How few, comparatively, will allow, that such a reduction of a large system to a very small number of clear, indisputable, essential first principles, will serve the cause of christianity! How many will pretend to think such a reduction dangerous to thirty-five out of thirty-nine articles of faith? How many will confound a denial of the essentiality, so to speak, of a proposition, with a denial of the truth of it? How many will go further still, and execrate the latitudinarian, who presumes in this manner to subvert christianity itself! I rejoice in prospect of that day, *when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to his gospel*, Romans ii. 16. when we shall stand not at the tribunal of human prejudices and passions, but at the just bar of a clement God. Here, were I only concerned, I would rest, and my answer to all complainants should be a respectful silence before their oracles of reason and religion: but alas! I have nine children, and my ambition is, if it be not an unpardonable presumption to compare insects with angels, my ambition is to engage them to treat a spirit of intolerance, as Hamilcar taught Hannibal to treat the old Roman spirit of universal dominion. The enthusiastic Carthaginian parent, going to offer a sacrifice to Jupiter for the success of an intended war, took with him his little son Hannibal, then only nine years of age, and eager to accompany his father, led him to the altar, made him lay his little hand on the sacrifice, and swear, that he would never be in friendship with the Romans. We may sanctify this thought by transferring it to other objects, and,

and, while we sing in the church glory to God in the highest, vow perpetual peace with all mankind, and reject all weapons except those which are spiritual, we may, we must declare war against a spirit of intolerance from generation to generation. Thus Moses wrote *a memorial in a book, rehearsed it in the ears of Joshua, built an altar, called the name of it Jehovah my banner, and said, The Lord hath sworn, that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation*, Exod. xvii. 14—16.

We are neither going to contrast human creeds with one another, nor with the Bible ; we are not going to affirm or deny any propositions contained in them ; we only design to prove, that all consist of human explications as well as divine revelations, and consequently, that all are not of equal importance, nor ought any to be imposed on the disciples of Christ, either by those who are not disciples of the Son of God, or by those who are. The subject is delicate and difficult, not through any intricacy in itself, but through a certain infelicity of the times. An error on the one side may be fatal to revelation, by alluring us to sacrifice the pure doctrines of religion to a blind benevolence ; and on the other an error may be fatal to religion itself, by inducing us to make it a patron of intolerance. We repeat it again, a system of christian doctrine is the object of christian liberty ; the articles, which compose a human system of christian doctrine, are divisible into the two classes of doctrines, and explications ; the first we attribute to Christ, and call christian doctrines, the last to some of his disciples, and these we call human explications ; the first are true, the last may be so ; the first execrate intolerance, the last cannot be supported without the spirit of it. I will endeavour to explain my meaning by an example.

Every believer of revelation allows the authenticity of this passage of holy Scripture, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*, John iii. 16.—

If we cast this into propositional form, it will afford many propositions as it contains ideas. Each idea clearly contained in the text I call an idea of Jesus Christ, a christian sentiment, a truth of revelation, in a word, a christian doctrine. Each of these ideas of the text, in forming itself into a proposition, will naturally associate with itself

itself a few other ideas of the expletive kind, these I call secondary ideas in distinction from the first, which I call primary ; or, in plainer style, ideas clearly of the text I name christian doctrines, or doctrines of Christ, and all the rest I call human explications of these doctrines ; they may be christian—they may not ; for I am not sure, that the next idea, which always follows a first in my mind, was the next idea to the first in the mind of Jesus Christ : the first is certainly his, he declares it, the second might be his : but as he is silent, I can say nothing certain ; where he stops, my infallibility ends, and my uncertain reason begins.

The following propositions are evidently in the text, and consequently they are christian doctrines emanating from the Author of Christianity, and pausing to be examined before the intelligent powers of his creatures.—There is an everlasting life, a future state of eternal happiness—the mediation of the only begotten Son of God is necessary to men's enjoyment of eternal happiness—believing in Christ is essential to a participation of eternal felicity—every believer in Christ shall have everlasting life—unbelievers shall perish—all the blessings of christianity originate in God, display his love, and are given to the world. These, methinks, we may venture to call primary ideas of christianity, genuine truths of revelation ; but each doctrine will give occasion to many questions, and although different expositors will agree in the matter of each proposition, they will conjecture very differently concerning the manner of its operation.

One disciple of Christ, whom we call Richard, having read this text, having exercised his thoughts on the meaning of it, and having arranged them in the propositional form now mentioned, if he would convince another disciple, whom we name Robert, of the truth of any one of his propositions, would be obliged to unfold his own train of thinking, which consists of an associated concatenation of ideas, some of which are primary ideas of Jesus Christ, and others secondary notions of his own, additions, perhaps of his wisdom, perhaps of his folly, perhaps of both ; but all however, intended to explicate his notion of the text, and to facilitate the evidence of his notion to his brother.—Robert admits the proposition : but not exactly in Richard's sense. In this case, we assort ideas, we take what
both

both allow to be original ideas of our common Lord, and we reckon thus, Here are nine ideas in this proposition, numbers one, three, six, nine, genuine, primary ideas of Christ; numbers two, four, five, secondary ideas of Richard; numbers seven, eight, secondary ideas of Robert; the first constitute a divine doctrine, the last a human explication; the first forms one divine object, the last two human notions of its mode of existence, manner of operation, or something similar: but, be each what it may, it is human explication, and neither synod nor senate can make it more.

(To be continued.)

An Abstract of Watts's Rational Foundation of a Christian Church.

(Continued from page 135.)

THE Church of Christ, in the sense we now use it, is a *society or congregation of persons both men and women, making a credible profession of christianity, and united by mutual agreement or consent, to meet together usually at the same time and place, for the performance of christian worship.*— This is the clearest and plainest notion I can frame of a particular church of Christ. Consult the book of Acts, the sacred epistles, where the word *church* is used, at least, forty or fifty times in this sense. Let it be noticed here, that such a society as this may be properly called *a church*, where their preachers, ministers, or all their officers are dead, or even before they have any minister or officers fixed among them, and without doubt they have a power to receive any person that desires it, and makes credible profession of christianity, into their society, having judged his profession credible, and declared him, in their judgment, fit for christian communion.

But

But it would lead me too far from my present design to insist upon particular proof of these things, which has often been done, and which is now the pretty general opinion of them that are not attached to any particular party, but give themselves leave to think freely, and follow the dictates of reason and revelation.

The business of receiving members into the communion of the church, and the forbidding and excluding of them, is a matter of serious importance, and often attended with great difficulty. A whole assembly of men cannot be supposed to manage this affair altogether with decency and regularity, and without confusion: therefore it is abundantly convenient, if not necessary, to commit the first and special care of these matters also to particular persons, of human and divine knowledge superior to the rest.—— Persons of great skill in the things of God, in serious religion, and in the affairs and tempers of men, qualified with due zeal for the honour and purity of Christ's churches—and filled with great tenderness and compassion to the souls of men—persons of good judgment and discretion, of great meekness, condescension and charity, that if possible, they may not give occasion to the church to exclude any of the sheep of Christ from the visible fold, nor admit unclean animals into the flock.

The chief officers of a particular church, whether they be called bishops, ministers, presbyters, elders, pastors, guides, leaders, governors, or rulers, &c. are the proper persons to have the *first oversight, and chief care* in this matter—to receive persons into communion, either with the explicit and formal vote of all the congregation, or only their implicit and silent consent.

But if it happen that there is but one minister or presbyter in that church, or if the ministers are young men of small experience in the world, it is usual and proper, that some of the eldest, gravest, and wisest members be *deputed by the church, to join with and assist* the ministers in the care and management of this affair.

Those persons who have been chosen by the church, and have been solemnly devoted by the church, and have also solemnly devoted themselves to that office or service, have been usually called *rulers, elders*. And such officers have been supposed to be described in 1 Tim. i. 17. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Rom. xii. 8. but if such persons are but appointed to assist when necessary,

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necessary, we need not determine whether to call it a *divine order*, or merely *prudential*, since the scripture has not determined this matter with uncontested evidence.

These ministers, officers, and persons so deputed by the church, are therefore the first and proper judges of the credibility of any person professing the christian faith, and desiring communion with that church.

Yet in this case they are not so *absolute and supreme*, but that the congregation must some way or other approve of their judgment, either by an explicit vote, or at least, by silent consent, for it is still the consent of the church that must make him a member, or the congregation may, for just reasons, disallow of their judgment, in particular cases; and if they proceed obstinately to mismanage their affairs, and notoriously misapply right rules, that church or society may reverse their sentence, and act according to their own judgment; and if it be needful, *may also call them to an account for it*, and assume the judgment, exclusion, and admission of members entirely and immediately into their own hands; till they shall chuse other officers who shall preside in this affair, and exercise this power more agreeably to those sacred rules and terms of communion, which that society believes to be the will of Christ in his word.

This conduct of affairs seems not only to be founded in the very nature of religious societies, but countenanced by a variety of scriptures in the New Testament, where the directions of the apostle concerning the receiving and excluding of members are addressed to the churches of Christ, at Rome—at Corinth—at Thessalonica—Rom. xv. 7.—xvi. 1, 2. 1 Cor. v. 4, 7, 13. 2 Theff. iii. 6.

Though the apostle Paul gives directions to Timothy and Titus about the rejection of heretics, yet it must be noted, that these two were extraordinary persons; nor does it follow that every ordinary minister has the same power, nor indeed does it appear that Timothy and Titus were to exercise it without the church's consent.

For St. Paul himself, when he gave the apostolic orders for excommunicating the incestuous Corinthian, would have it done when the whole church was gathered together, and as an act of that particular community; as in the texts before cited.

Though the epistles in the *Revelations* are inscribed to the ministers, yet it is evident that the contents of these
epistles

epistles are plainly addressed to the whole body of christians that make up those several societies or churches, and they were to cast out idolaters, &c. from among them, as an act of the churches by the ministers.

Though ministers and elders are sometimes called *guides, and rulers, &c.* yet it is never to be understood in so absolute a sense, as to take all power away from the society or congregation, and leave the ministers to tyrannize as they please over the churches, and, like Diotrephes, to admit and exclude whom they will, for which usurpation the apostle John severely censures him, 3 John, 9, 10.

Now, when such a mode of admission into churches as I have described, *by the ministration of the elders, and the consent of the church*, has the light of nature and reason leading us into it, and the scripture gives frequent countenance to it by various rules and examples, it does not fall very far short of a sacred institution.

✕ But it will be objected here, That it may happen that ministers may be in the right, and the people in the wrong, in their judgment in particular cases; and must the vote of the people decide such an affair against the opinion of ministers, elders, or rulers?

I answer, in the first place, That when any person is proposed to the church, concerning whose admission the minister and people are not agreed, it is much better to persuade that person to seek communion with some other church, rather than occasion strife and debate betwixt the people and the minister.

But, second, if this method cannot be pursued, but admission of the person is still pressed, it is the duty of the minister to endeavour, by all proper arguments, to convince and persuade the people. If this will not do, then he should lay the laws of Christ before the people, and charge them solemnly, in the name of Christ, to admit or exclude only such persons whom Christ appoints to be received or excluded. But if the people persist in their own judgment still, in opposition to the minister, they must be left to answer it to Christ their judge;—for Christ has left no infallible vicegerent on earth to govern his churches contrary to their own sense, and interpretation of his written word.

It may be proper, on such an occasion, that means of reconciliation should be tried, but if these prove vain, there

There is no power on earth, that I know, which can authoritatively determine any minister to give the sacred ordinances of Christ, nor can any power on earth command and constrain a christian church to receive a person to their communion, whom they in their consciences judge unworthy of it; therefore, rather than dwell together in endless contentions, the minister must peacefully resign his office in that church. There is nothing perfect in human affairs on earth, where knowledge and grace are so imperfect. Yet I may venture to affirm, that things would scarce ever arise to this extreme height of difference, if christian charity and love, humility and mutual condescension, were but more universally taught and practised, and the furious and narrow spirits of men tempered and enlarged, according to the glorious pattern of the apostles of Christ.

Here will occur another enquiry also, and that is, When the congregation itself is divided in their sentiments, how must any proposed question be determined? I answer, In all such cases, the light of nature, and the common usage of mankind have determined, that the greater number should carry the question according to their sentiments, and the lesser ought to submit. *Ma*

But I would take the liberty to give my opinion in point of prudence thus: That though in questions of less moment it is proper enough that the major vote should determine the case, yet, in an affair of considerable importance, such as the choice of a minister, or receiving a member, &c. if it were possible, I would obtain the general concurrence of the society; for it would be better, if such a thing could be managed, as that no old member be made uneasy by receiving a new one; much less should a society that will act with prudence, admit a new member contrary to the sentiments of their minister, or give occasion of grief to him.

Several of the leading preachers frequently declare, if I had had any thing on my mind respecting them, I should have made it known to them before it was made public. The following letter will prove, that near four years ago, the preachers and others, were appealed to upon this subject. Though the letter was neither addressed nor directed to them, but to the leaders and stewards, yet in every circuit they saw it: and in a great number of circuits suppressed it; not suffering the persons to whom it was addressed, to know any thing about it. When letters addressed to leaders and stewards are carried by post-men to the chapels, the preachers generally open them, without the least hesitation, and if they are not approved, the leaders and stewards hardly ever see them. This would be actionable in law to the world, but how far *the office of ministers of Christ justifies opening and suppressing letters directed to other persons, I leave the reader to determine.* Wherever the people are ignorant in any circuit of this letter, it is a proof that it has been suppressed. Had the preachers attended to its contents, and made the necessary alterations it points out, matters would not have come to the length they have come to already. And instead of their blaming me on this head, they ought to charge themselves with neglecting private admonition, and constraining us to bring the same matters publicly before the people.

ASHTON, Jan. 23, 1797.

A. K.

To all Local Preachers, Circuit Stewards, Town Stewards, Class Leaders, and intelligent persons, in the Methodist societies and congregations, this letter is most respectfully addressed, by their affectionate brethren, and hearty well-wishers,

C. TRUEMAN.
M. FREEMAN.

Dear Brethren,

AS this is an age of free discussion, in which men seem to be disposed to think for themselves, and to try every

every thing by the touchstone of reason and the balance of justice : and as we have imbibed in some measure the spirit of the times, we have been led to examine several things in our connexion, and to offer to your consideration our thoughts on these subjects. We have several very considerable evils to complain of ; which have given us, and many others, a great deal of uneasiness, and which, unless they be reformed in time, will probably do us much hurt, if they do not entirely ruin us. We do not, however, despair of these abuses being reformed. Let every one of us do his part, looking to God for his blessing, and our success is abundantly certain. With this view the following lines were written.

Addressees on different subjects, both by societies and individuals, were sent from many circuits to the two last conferences. These addressees ought to have been considered with the greatest attention. They were the voice of a numerous and respectable body of ourselves. This voice should have been heard, whether it could have been complied with or not. But how was it treated ? Why, strange to tell ! upon a motion being made, by a preacher whose name need not be mentioned, a majority of the conference voted for their being all destroyed, without examination. Thus the business was finished at once. The preachers spent days in trying some of their brethren who got ordained, and the author of a pamphlet addressed to the friends and members of the Newcastle society, and in other things of little importance ; but they had no time to waste in examining the mind and will of their followers. The pamphlet alluded to was written on liberal principles ; and in our opinion the author deserved the thanks of the conference, instead of being censured. We have read it ourselves, and with every thinking person in our connexion would peruse it. To return : Their conduct in destroying our petitions, was as gross an insult as could have been offered unto us. One would at least think, that they are as independent of us, as the state clergy are of their followers ; but this is not the case. We do not wish to be unreasonable ; but we will be heard, or our resentment shall be felt. At present, the preachers appear to have all power in their own hands, and only employ leaders and stewards at their own will. Would it not be proper for us to have some concern in managing such matters as materially concern ourselves ?

ourselves? Not to be tedious, we propose to your consideration the following plan. If it be admitted as it is, or with amendments, such as your good sense may suggest; or something better be adopted instead of it; our end will be answered, and the good of the connexion will be promoted.

1st. Let every society choose its own leaders and steward; and let the leaders and steward choose a circuit steward. Let there be a general election of leaders, town and circuit stewards every year, before the preachers go to conference; but let the people be left at liberty to re-elect their old leaders and stewards, or to change them as circumstances may direct. These leaders should, as much as possible, meet the classes alternately; much in the same way as our local preachers in several circuits supply the different places. This plan would prevent improper leaders from being continued, and bring others forward that might be useful. Nor would there be any difficulty in bringing this plan into operation. Notice might be given a convenient time before hand, when the election of leaders would take place; which would give all who should be so disposed an opportunity to attend. The superintendant preacher might propose candidates one by one, to be elected or rejected by a simple majority; and he might have the casting voice in case of an equal division.—If this plan were put into execution, the leaders would be the proper representatives of the people, and not the creatures of the preachers. Their petitions would be the petitions of the people; their advice would convey the wishes of the people; which at present is not the case.

2. When any man should step forward to give a word of exhortation, or to preach, it would be the business of the leaders, elected according to the abovementioned plan, to collect the sense of the societies and congregations, at those places where he hath preached; that it may be known by the superintendant preacher, how he is received; what sort of talents he has; and whether he is likely to be useful. If his talents are tolerable; if he is pretty well received by a majority of those who hear him, and bids fair for usefulness, let him then receive a plan as a local preacher; and be regularly employed, at such places where he is wanted, and where he can make it convenient to attend, without neglecting his business, hurting himself, or bringing

ing unnecessary expences upon the people. As long as he shall walk circumspectly, preach acceptably, and exercise his talents usefully, his plan shall be continued to him; but if he should walk disorderly, or his preaching be unacceptable; or if he do no sort of good, in the opinion of the majority of those to whom he preaches, let him again become a leader, a private member, or be excluded the society.

3. After a person has acted in the capacity of a local preacher for a sufficient time, to make his piety, ability, and usefulness evident, he may then, if he so incline, be placed in a more extensive sphere of action. With the approbation of the people, let him be proposed for trial, as a travelling preacher. He should first be proposed at a quarterly meeting, when many of the leaders, stewards, and local preachers are present; and then proposed at the district meeting, if there should be one; last of all, he should be proposed at conference. Such a procedure would prevent improper persons being admitted among us upon trial; or at least, it would go nearly as far as human prudence can go in preventing such an evil, which is by no means the case at present.

4. More care should be taken in placing preachers on trial in proper circuits, and under suitable assistants.—— They should be sent to such circuits as are suitable to their abilities; and placed under such assistants as will be both able and willing to instruct them in every thing that may be subservient to their future usefulness. They should be taught how to improve their time to the best advantage; what books to read, and how to pursue all their studies. The assistant should frequently examine them on these points, and assist them to the utmost of his power.—— If they have made considerable improvement in their four years of trial, and have been in general acceptable, and in some measure useful; and have preserved a good moral character in the opinion of their fellow-labourers, and of those among whom they have travelled (their sense being collected by the abovementioned plan) in this case, they may without danger be admitted into full connexion.—— But if the reverse of this appear to be the case, if they have made little or no improvement; if they have done little or no good; if they are in general badly received, and above all, if their moral character be suspicious, let them be

dismissed from the ministry, and sent to their trades. If any compensation for the loss of time be judged necessary, let the conference grant it: but considering the rules on which they entered on trial, they can demand nothing as their just right; but the conference, if they choose, may do something for them by way of gratuity. As the case now stands, when a person is once admitted upon trial, he is sure to be continued. Having passed the door of entrance, he must be employed for life, if his moral character be good, let the consequences be what they may. For want of more precaution in the admission of preachers, we have many among us whose usefulness is doubtful; and not a few whose talents are despicable; a considerable number who are ill received; and too many, God knows, whose moral character is exceedingly dubious.

5. Every one of our preachers ought, as soon as possible, to get a general knowledge of the English grammar; so as to be able to speak his native language with a tolerable degree of propriety. For want of this, we labour under a load of reproach, which we justly deserve, and which might very easily be avoided. He ought also to study his discourses, so far as to be able to feed the people with knowledge. Hardly any preacher can speak with propriety without premeditation. Those preachers who despise premeditation, under the pretence of relying on the aids of God's Spirit, are enthusiasts. The Spirit's aid is necessary, and will be granted in the use of suitable means; but to expect it without these, is presumption in the extreme.— Let those preachers who despise study, carefully read St. Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus. For a minister of the gospel, not to be diligent in reading and study, is an unpardonable sin. And if a Methodist preacher be not studious, this is of itself a sufficient reason why he ought to be dismissed from the work, and returned to his trade, Mr. Wesley himself being judge. For want of reading, thinking, and writing, many of our preachers palm nonsense upon their congregations, and do our cause much hurt. This is the more to be wondered at, as they have so many noble examples before their eyes. The good effects of application may be seen in the shining talents and great usefulness of Benson, Bradburn, Taylor, and many others, who are an honour to us, and of whom we may be exceedingly proud. Such men are entitled to the respect
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of all. We never think of them, but it gives us a singular pleasure, that we belong to a community that has such worthy characters in it. God grant that they may be more numerous.

6. When a preacher, by repeated crimes, or by his lukewarmness, or by lording it over the people, or by any other means, becomes useless, he ought to be laid aside; unless, after reproof and suitable admonition, he alter his conduct. Keeping among us persons of this description, encourages others to tread in their steps, and by this means the success of the gospel is prevented.

7. Every preacher who is able to travel, but not willing to take a circuit, because it does not suit his wife and family, or because he has an opportunity of following some lucrative business, should be told plainly, that he must either take such a circuit as the conference think proper to send him to, or else have his name struck out of the list of travelling preachers. If he will not travel, let him be content with the name and office of a local preacher.

8. No man ought to continue either as a supernumerary or a travelling preacher, when his want of health makes it impossible for him to perform the duties of his office. — Many places are neglected, or but indifferently supplied, by persons continuing to fill up places, the duties of which they are not able to perform.

9. Care should be taken in admitting members into our societies, and that none be continued in them, except such as wish to adorn their profession. In these respects we cannot do better than adhere strictly to our rules. A desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from sin, is the only necessary condition of being admitted; and perseverance in evidencing this desire, by avoiding evil, doing good, and keeping the ordinances, is the only necessary condition of continuing with us. But, if this condition be notoriously violated, after repeated admonitions, such persons ought to be cut off from us, never to be admitted again, until their repentance appear to be genuine. — Leaders should be very strict in attending to their duty, and should labour to get well acquainted with every member in the classes they meet.

10. A majority of leaders, fairly chosen by the people, ought to know the minds of their electors, and act accord-
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ing to their will in all things, relative to the temporal and spiritual concerns of the society. If a majority of these are for the ordinances being administered by their own preachers, and in their own chapels, it would be unjust to refuse them. The same may be said of service in church hours. But if a majority are on the other side the question, the minority ought peaceably to submit. The minority may endeavour to enlighten the majority by their arguments; but should never wish to govern them. This would be unreasonable and unjust.

So much for the weightier matters of Methodism. We have now to make a few remarks concerning money matters. The management of our funds is a matter of some consequence, and worthy of the notice of all who wish for the prosperity of our cause.

1. The leaders, town stewards, and circuit stewards, chosen according to the above suggested plan, ought to be acquainted with all the collections that are made, and to what ends they are applied. They should, as much as possible, receive and pay in the monies, not suffering the preachers to touch any part, except what concerns themselves.—Or, if the preachers carry in the collections, the town stewards should give exact accounts to the circuit stewards, and they should send exact accounts to conference.

2. No material alterations should be made in any circuit by the preachers, but with the concurrence of a majority of the leaders and stewards in the circuit. Alterations are made either for the convenience of preachers, or the good of the people, or for both. In every reasonable case, the consent of the people may easily be obtained: they are both considerate, and to their preachers affectionate.

3. The leaders and stewards should have power to bring any charge against a preacher, in a leaders' or a quarterly meeting; and they have a right to a fair hearing. These charges may respect his moral character, preaching, or any unadvised steps he may have taken in altering the hours of preaching, giving fewer discourses, putting out or taking in members, &c.

4. At the quarterly meeting immediately before conference, the leaders and stewards should honestly declare the sense of the people concerning the preachers; that no preacher may stay two years in a circuit, whether he be the

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the assistant or not, where he is not well received ; and that the conference may know what preachers may stay two or even three years in a circuit, with the approbation of the people, who should always be indulged as much as possible, and never crossed but when it is absolutely necessary.

5. There ought to be no partiality with respect to the board of different preachers, to servants' wages, or any thing else, without the most evident necessity. If two preachers do each the same quantity of work, it is unjust to make any difference. If two families are in equal circumstances, why should one be allowed half-a-crown per week for a servant, while the other is obliged to make eighteenpence, or two shillings do? Such a regulation is not founded in natural justice. That such partialities exist among us is well known, and have certainly given great uneasiness, and occasioned many divisions.

6. Would it not be proper for every circuit, or every district, to be represented in conference by a delegate of its own choosing? He could carry in the collections, see how the monies are expended, and would be able to give a particular account of our money matters, to such of our friends who might wish to be informed. These delegates should be present when the preachers' characters are examined, and when they are stationed for their circuits.— They would furnish the conference with much useful information, and prevent many improper appointments, and see that our funds are rightly managed. Honesty will never shrink from responsibility. Should our preachers object to this regulation, have we not some reason to suspect their honesty? They had better consider this in time; for if once the confidence of the people be lost, the collections will fail, and the funds be ruined.

To shew the propriety of some such regulations as we have proposed, we beg leave to transcribe two rules, respecting the preachers' fund, which were agreed upon the last conference. To us they appear absurd, unjust, and contrary to good management. They appear to have been framed by such as have travelled a considerable number of years, and agreed to by such as have not well considered them. They are as follow:

“ Every preacher who has laboured longer than twelve years without departing from the work, and is judged by the

the conference to be worn out, shall receive one pound annually for life, for every year he has travelled above twelve, to the time he became superannuated. Every widow of a travelling preacher shall receive twelve pounds a year for life, and if her deceased husband travelled more than twelve years before he was worn out, she shall be allowed one pound annually for life, for every year her husband travelled above twelve, till the time he was superannuated."

These rules are so grossly absurd, and so notoriously unjust, that we have thought it our duty to expose them.—Among other objections to them the following strike us forcibly:—

1. Some preachers who have travelled many years, and have strength to travel several years longer, will become superannuated, because they have a title to a sufficient maintenance. This is so great a temptation, that by many among us it will not be withstood.

2. Other preachers, who are a dead weight upon us, whom we would gladly superannuate, will be induced to travel several years longer than they ought to do, merely for the sake of increasing their income. This will be a great evil, and should be guarded against, but instead of this, here is a strong temptation to it.

3. These rules may distress some worthy preachers, whose only crime may be that of being deprived of health or strength before they have travelled long enough to be entitled to such an annuity as their circumstances may require. They may also distress some poor widows, who have been unfortunate enough to have lost their husbands, and to be left with a small family, before they had travelled long enough to give them a right to as much as is necessary to keep them above want. This would be a fore evil, and a black disgrace unto us.

4. These rules may needlessly distress us, by impoverishing our funds. They may and will give many of our worn-out preachers, and our widows, an opportunity of drawing a great deal more from our funds than they need, which ought never to be allowed. No worn-out preacher has any right to a farthing more than what, with good management, is sufficient to keep him comfortable; the same may be said of our widows. Some old preachers have been imprudent enough to marry young wives; and what
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has happened may happen again; in which case it may happen, that the connexion may be burthened with many young widows, whose only right to their large annuities is, their husbands have been blessed with a good measure of health and strength. Mr. Wright, who had travelled upwards of thirty years, and was nearly sixty years of age, married a young girl of about twenty, with whom he lived only a few months. Had these rules been made two years sooner, this young widow would have been entitled to as many pounds per annum for life, as Mr. Wright had travelled years in our connexion. Instead of a reward, such old dotards, and such young simpletons should receive a severe reproof: their conduct is foolish, and imprudent, not to say wicked.

5. That these rules are extremely unjust will appear from the following supposed case: Let us suppose that there are two worn-out preachers, both worthy men, and whose wants are nearly equal; the only difference, one has travelled twenty years, the other forty, and this difference is to be attributed to the providence of God, independent of their merit or demerit. This accidental difference makes a difference in their yearly allowance, which bears a proportion to their years of service: one has twenty pounds, the other has forty: the one is straitened, and the other is in affluent circumstances. The one has too little, the other too much. That such cases may happen, no one will deny. Let us then be determined to get these vile rules annulled, before their pernicious effects are felt.

Instead of being directed by such rules, let the wants of every preacher's widow, and of every worn-out preacher, determine the quantum of relief they shall receive; and let the preachers in conference judge of their wants.—Or, if this will not do, let some reasonable sum be fixed upon. But at any rate, the detestable rules in question must be annulled, or our support to the preachers' fund must, and shall be withdrawn.

That set of rules fixed upon last conference, has put the preachers' fund on a different footing from what it was before. They ought therefore to be made publicly known to the people. For if money be begged for this new fund on the old plan, they are swindled out of their money, without knowing to what use, or in what manner it is employed.

employed. The money is collected from among ourselves, and we have a right to know how it is expended.

There are also abuses both in the contingent fund, and in the fund for supporting Kingswood school. In the conducting of these funds, there seems to be much mystery.—The accounts which appear in the minutes of conference are too general, and little can be learned from them, how the money is expended. In the contingent fund in particular, pretty large sums are employed as *secret service money*. If true accounts were given of this mysterious business, we should have such articles as follow : Mr. ————ten pounds for going to conference in the coach, when he had a good horse in the country. Twenty pounds for furnishing such a preacher's house with a new carpet, mahogany chairs, &c. Thirty pounds to remove a preacher and his family two hundred miles in the stage coach, when he might have stayed another year where he was, or have removed to a neighbouring circuit, with little or no expence. Thirty pounds for gowns and cassocks for three preachers.—Fifty pounds towards building such a preaching-house, &c.

If such are the purposes to which the yearly collection is applied, the people ought to be informed that this is the case. For our parts, we have often contributed towards it, because we were told that the money was collected for the support of the gospel in the West of Ireland, and in the North of Scotland. And thousands give to this collection who are almost starving themselves, from a persuasion of the laudable purposes to which it is applied. Did they know the truth, they would not think it their duty to give any thing at all. Is it right thus to deceive them? We think not, and are persuaded you will be of the same mind.

If the preachers had paid a proper degree of attention to your addresses last year, we should not have troubled you with these observations.—We have written freely, without the least design of doing any harm to the cause. On the contrary, we have been influenced by a desire of doing good. If success should attend our endeavours, God shall have the praise; but if not, we shall at least have the testimony of our conscience, that our attempt was well meant. We have done our part towards the reform of the abovementioned abuses. Do you yours. Enlighten the people.

people. Read or lend this letter to as many of them as you possibly can, and do not suffer yourselves to be discouraged by timorous or interested men. In so doing, you will contribute to the prosperity of Methodism; you will honour God, and greatly oblige, your

Disinterested friends, and

Affectionate Brethren,

C. T.

M. F.

LONDON, Feb. 28, 1793.

A few things agreed upon, for the preservation of Discipline and Unity, by the Preachers and Leaders of the people called Methodists, in the Leaders' Meeting, held in Norfolk-street chapel, Sheffield, 26th Sept. 1796.

1. **W**E will do all things as in the presence of God: and endeavour by all possible means, to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.——

2. *What are the qualifications necessary for a class leader?*

1st. That he is clearly justified by faith.——2dly, That he believes present and entire sanctification to be attainable only by faith; and is, at least, earnestly seeking it. 3dly, That he walks becoming the gospel.——No person that is proved to be destitute of these qualifications shall be appointed to meet a class, or suffered to continue as a class leader among us.——3. No leader shall have more than one class.——4. Every leader, or his assistant, shall be obliged to attend every leaders' meeting, unless hindered by sickness, or unavoidable business:——But if neither the leader, nor his assistant, attend for three weeks together, he shall give his reasons in the leaders' meeting; and

and if the majority of that meeting deem them not satisfactory, the superintendant preacher shall remove him from his office.——5. The leaders shall, by every prudent and loving method, promote the temporal interest of the society in their respective classes.——6. The leaders shall use no means to take members from each other's classes.——7. The leaders shall bring from their different classes to every leaders' meeting, the names of all the sick, and the places of their abode.——8. The leaders shall be strictly examined once a quarter, concerning their method of meeting class.——9. The superintendant preacher shall act, in conjunction with the leaders' meeting, in appointing new leaders, or removing others from their office.——10. The preacher shall keep a weekly account of all the leaders present or absent.——11. The preacher, once in four weeks, shall meet the leaders in band on the Friday evening.——12. There shall be three stewards of this society: the office of one of them to inspect the temporal accounts of each class-paper, every week in the leaders' meeting.——13. One, or more, of the stewards, shall be changed every year.——14. The stewards shall read over once a quarter, the receipts and disbursements of all their accounts in the leaders' meeting.

15. *What regulations are necessary for receiving members into the society?*

1st, No leader shall bring a person to the preacher for a note of admission, until he has met four times in class.—No person received on trial only, shall have his name in the class paper. The names of all the members shall be inserted by the preachers only.——2dly, No person shall have a ticket, until he has met two months on trial.——3dly, Every leader shall bring a list of those persons, who have met two months, to the leaders' meeting.——4thly, The names of those persons, who have met two months, shall be read over in the leaders' meeting by the preacher; and, if no sufficient objection is made in that meeting, the preacher shall receive them into connexion in the society meeting, the Sunday evening following, by exhortation and prayer. The leaders shall give those persons, who are to be received, timely notice in their several classes. The leaders, with the preachers, shall judge of exempt cases, whether arising from modesty or natural relations.

16. *What is our rule in the expulsion of Members?* 1st,

1st, That those who do not renew their tickets quarterly, or omit their class without sufficient reason being given, exclude themselves.——2dly, That no member shall be privately expelled.——3dly, Every third leaders' meeting, at least, the preacher shall enquire whether there be any in the different classes, that walk disorderly, and will not be reprov'd: and, if it appears that sufficient means have been used to reclaim them, the superintendant preacher shall put them from the society. No person shall be expelled from the society, until such means have been used. Signed,

Henry Taylor, William Bramwell, Michael Emmet, John Woodcock, James Walker, John Burdett, Francis Hawke, Joseph Roberts, Henry Longden, Samuel Pryor, James Vickers, James Barlow, Charles Hodgson, Benjamin Wilkinson, Benjamin Woolhouse, Samuel Lee, Joseph Mycock, Henry Froggat, John Baggaly, Thomas Milner, Thomas Bower, William Woodcock, John Stacey, William Toft, George Fowler, George Mitchell, George Newton, William Fox, John Finningley, Joseph Myers, William Bradshaw, William Shipman, Charles Clarke, John Walker, John Blackwell, Samuel Cocker, Samuel Wailey, Robert Marples, John Parkin, William Fenton, Robert Russel, Jonathan Beet, Thomas Greaves, John Kirk, Joseph Roberts, Junr. W. E. Miller, Joseph Woollen, Thomas Bird, Elijah West, John Berwick, Joseph Manners, William Hodgson, George Barton, Jonathan Shaw, Paul Prince, Samuel Holroyd, H. Ashforth, John Bingley, S. Yeadon, Thomas Billam, M. Woodcroft, E. Pafs, C. Rhodes.

The above regulations were agreed upon by a full leaders' meeting, for the advantage of the Sheffield society. Preachers and leaders were unanimous. They only refer to their own place, without advising any society to pursue the same measures: they have made *positive laws* respecting the admission and expulsion of members, the appointment, or removal of leaders, &c. and have put it out of the power of an assistant to disturb and embroil the society, by acting contrary to the minds of the leaders and people. The other regulations are considered of some importance, for the improvement of the discipline of their large society. Yet printing and circulating what they

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have

have done, has given a good deal of offence to Mr. Mather, and several preachers. It is considered an innovation. The preachers that have agreed to this plan, are represented as not sufficiently respecting *the rights of the conference*. They are in fact considered as *innovators*.—Such measures may displease the *ruling few*, but I am persuaded, that the preachers in general, will highly approve of their conduct; and if not *over awed* by those who are at the helm of affairs, they will avow this at the next conference.

The Sheffield society has greatly increased since these regulations were published. The admission of new members, collected together into pews near the pulpit, in the presence of the whole society, after their names have been read over, and their characters examined in the leaders' meeting, is attended with the happiest consequences.—The people are stirred up to pray for them, while they receive a suitable exhortation and charge from a preacher. This plan is *so reasonable and scriptural*, that none can justly oppose it. If it be an innovation upon the old plan of Methodism, it is according to the word of God, and has already been attended with blessed consequences.

There is something worthy of the observation of every circuit, in their local preachers' meeting. Once in four months they meet the travelling preachers about ten o'clock in the forenoon. After prayer, their characters are examined—enquiries are made respecting their attention to their places—their gifts and usefulness are not over looked—they relate their experience when met together—and endeavour to quicken each other in the great work which they are called to accomplish. When the assistant produces a rough draft of the plan, then every alteration is made which the local preachers desire for their mutual satisfaction.

The following printed extracts from the minutes of a meeting, where upwards of fifty were present, held at Whitely-Wood, Oct. 17, 1796, will give some idea of their proceedings :

First, Who are received into the local preachers' plan?
Ans. Thomas Higgins, George Pinder, and John Hurst.—
Secondly, No preacher on trial shall preach among us without a note from the assistant : and then only in the presence of a local preacher. *Thirdly*, How shall we prevent formal-
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mality amongst us? *First*, in singing: Sing short; no more than six verses at a time: Sing quick, and often exhort in the time of singing.—*Secondly*, in prayer: Pray short; use plain simple words; be serious as in the presence of God: avoid exhortation in prayer.—*Fourthly*, What things are needful to attend to respecting preaching? *Ans.* Neglect not previous preparation, by reading, meditation, and prayer, under any pretext whatever. *Fifthly*, What is the most useful method of reading the scriptures? *Ans.* Read the Bible with close attention before you consult commentators. *Sixthly*, What shall be done to make all the local preachers attend this meeting? *Ans.* If a preacher neglect attending, he shall give his reasons at the next meeting:—And if they be not satisfactory to a majority of that meeting, he shall be suspended from the plan for four months.”

Neither the things agreed on in the leaders' meeting, nor these extracts, are given as a model for others to conform to in every point, but they are brought forward *as a specimen* of what a great and respectable circuit has done. Many of our friends will conclude, that they have not carried matters far enough.—Hardly any will venture to censure their conduct.

There is one thing that should not be lost sight of, and that is this: Unless the leaders, stewards, and local preachers *are determined to maintain these privileges*, a change of travelling preachers next August, may set aside *in one week*, all that they have done. The next assistant may disapprove of their proceedings, and, previously commissioned by the conference, he may insist upon all things reverting back to their former state, that such a dangerous precedent may not continue, lest other circuits should follow their example, and perhaps go farther than they have done. If the leaders and local preachers should suffer themselves to be *moved from their own steadfastness* this way, they will have none to blame but themselves. And should other circuits follow their example, and form laws for the improvement of the different societies, it will be their wisdom not to suffer either the *conference collectively*, or any *individual assistant* to destroy what they have wrought.

ASHTON, 23d Jan. 1797.

A. K.

To the Editor of the MONITOR.

SIR,

CONsidering the diversity of men's interests, capacities, and opportunities of improvement, it seems impossible that all men should be of one mind on religious subjects.—Good men—and good men of one and the same party, have differed on some points; especially respecting discipline. Something of this nature appeared *even among the apostles*, and has been common among all parties in all ages. It is therefore no wonder, that among so numerous a body as the Methodist connexion, some diversity of sentiment should prevail. It ought to be matter of thankfulness that we continue harmonious as to doctrinal points; our only difference being about our discipline. As this subject has long been examined in private, it has at length become more public, general, and interesting; on this account I was glad to hear the proposal for a periodical publication, which I believe is the least expensive, and most likely way to promote a friendly correspondence, a general knowledge, and thereby a complete cure, to all debates. I am convinced much will depend on the temper and abilities of the managers of this work. I hope they will be men who value, and understand the true principles of peace and liberty; and who will steadily pursue them through the whole performance: which has not always been the case of those who have engaged in controversy. It is not pride, petulance, and ill nature that will convince men's consciences, and compose our jars; but a *calm and sober* appeal to the scriptures and to the reason of mankind.

If it would not be deemed imprudent and officious in me, I would request the managers not to intermeddle, any more than is necessary, in the debate between conference and one of their brethren, who has given them offence.—I have heard that several of the preachers are on his side, although they dare not avow this publicly, because as yet they are not independent, and therefore must be quiet.—These men doubtless would be glad to assist you as anonymous correspondents; while those on the other side would

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as gladly oppose ;—and one party being interested and the other injured, really or supposed, would perhaps divert you from the proposed end. I would not, however, be understood to insinuate, that the people should not concern themselves about their preachers : they ought certainly to stand by them, and esteem them highly for their work's sake.—The injured party especially deserves our support—for truth and justice are too sacred things to be denied on any consideration ; and so far as we are in our conscience persuaded that any truth, or any part of discipline, is important, neither peace nor charity will allow us to give it up. Let us, therefore, ever be ready, when properly called on, to plead its cause, in the name of the God of Truth : but let it be in a manner worthy of him ; and especially let us be on our guard that we do not pass harsh censures on our brethren, who think differently from us. It is very easy to say ill natured things ; this has been common in all controversies ; and if it appear in our's, it will certainly please our common enemies, and make them say, Aha ! so would we have it.

I shall now endeavour to point out, 1st, What is the *cause*, and 2d, What would be the *cure* of our present agitation :

As to the first, Some men, who have their own ends in view, would persuade us, that our divisions and disputes have many causes : whatever truth there may be in this, there is one great and general cause occasions and creates all the rest ; that is, *The authority claimed over us by the preachers, and the manner of exercising it.* It is true, sin is the cause of all our debates, and sufferings of every sort ; but yet we can discover sundry secondary causes, which we might avoid ; we shall never avoid them, however, unless we see them ; and I think we shall never see them in a proper point of view, until we look diligently into the glass of God's word, which is certainly far preferable to any prudential rules formed by men. If this be true, it would be well if all our members would examine our discipline, comparing it with the New Testament, endeavouring to find out the coincidence or disagreement between them.—

They might likewise compare the authority exercised over our society by our preachers, with the authority exercised over the primitive church by the apostles and their immediate successors, and they would certainly discover which is the most unlimited.

Whoever

Whoever reads the New Testament will find such passages as,—‘Obey them that have the rule over you—Feed the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers—Let them that rule well be counted worthy of double honour,’ &c. &c. From hence it appears, the ministers in the christian church, are, and ought to be the governors thereof. But as there are rulers, *so there are rules for God’s church*; and those ministers who despise and neglect the rules of scripture, and rule according to their own good pleasure, are not entitled to the obedience and subjection of God’s people: it is rather their duty to assert their liberty, and maintain the freedom granted them by Jesus Christ: for it is possible good men, though mistaken, would put them under a yoke of bondage, and shape their religion, not according to the pattern shewn in the mount, but according to some fancied providential circumstance.—The religion of Jesus, however modified by men, has been one and the same from the beginning.

Let us try to find out some parts of the discipline exercised by the apostolic church. If I should sometimes compare our rules with scripture-rules, I hope none will be offended; and if any should be offended, I only request him to say to himself—‘Is it not a sign I am greatly under the power of prejudice and sadly mistaken, when I cannot patiently hear of comparing our rules with the scriptures.’ One of the first acts, for I take it for granted that acts done by the apostles’ advice and approbation, will be considered as rules for our conduct, unless circumstances render it impossible or improper; I say, one of the first acts done in and by the christian church, was looking out seven men from among themselves, to discharge a certain duty: and granting this was only to take care of the poor; we have poor among us—but have we liberty to look out such persons as we think most proper to dispense our charity, or any other collections we make? If we have not, we are deprived of a just right, and are made to stumble on the very threshold of the church.

This is not the only instance where the people had a choice, for in 2 Cor. viii. 19, we read of the brother who was chosen of the churches to travel, &c. And in Acts xiv. 23. ‘When they had ordained them elders,’ &c. In the Greek, it is by the lifting up of hands, or by the suffrage

suffrage of the people, as is abundantly manifest from many learned commentators: the old English Bible has it, 'When they had ordained them elders by election.'—From such passages we may certainly infer, that the first christians had a voice in constituting their church officers. 2d, Did the church concur with the minister in managing their affairs?—Time would fail to select the numerous passages that declare this. I shall therefore only mention the following: When the matter of circumcision was in dispute in the church at Antioch, 'they determined that Paul, and Barnabas, and certain other of them should go up to Jerusalem about this question. And being brought on their way by the church, when they came to Jerusalem they were received by the church and by the apostles. All the *multitude* kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul. Then pleased it the *apostles* and *elders* and the *whole church*, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, and wrote letters by them after this manner: The apostles, and elders, and *brethren* send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles.—And when they came to Antioch, they gathered the *multitude* together, and delivered the epistle, &c.' Acts xv. 1—30.—Again, 'When Apollos was disposed to pass into Achaia, the *brethren* (not the ministers) wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him, &c.' Acts xviii. 27.—Again, 'Need we as some others epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you,' 2 Cor. iii. 1.—'When I come, whomsoever you shall approve by your letters him will I send,' &c. 1 Cor. xvi. 3.—From these passages I think it is undeniably evident, that the apostles themselves united the people with them in the management of church affairs. Do our preachers allow us the like privileges? or will they allow the present debates to be terminated in the manner above stated, respecting the dispute in the church of Antioch? Can any man compare our discipline with theirs, and not see the vast difference between them?

I shall conclude these remarks, with an extract from an eminent divine. If the apostles had excluded their hearers from all share of authority, 'No just arguments could be drawn from their actions. As apostles, with extraordinary powers and credentials, might claim an authority far superior to succeeding ministers, destitute of
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such powers and credentials: It would however have been happy for the church in every age, had its ordinary ministers taken the same care to act in concert with the people committed to their charge; and to pay all due deference to their natural rights, which the apostles themselves, extraordinary as their commission was, did on this (i. e. Acts vi. 4.) and other occasions. The three grand canons, that all things should be done decently, in charity, and to edification, duly attended to, would supercede the necessity of ten thousand which have been made since; and perhaps, *if rightly weighed*, would be found absolutely to vacate a great part of them.' May the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Master of his assemblies, open all our eyes, to see the goings out and comings in of his church, that every person may know and enjoy his proper place, discharging the duties thereof to the glory of God, and the good of our common cause!

I shall now endeavour to shew, whether the people in the apostles' days had any concern in receiving and excluding members. The passage quoted formerly, Acts xviii. 27. prove, that the church had power to reject Apollos, otherwise there was no necessity of exhorting the disciples to receive him. The apostle enjoins the Corinthians not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, 2 Cor. vi. 14.—18. 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.' Eph. v. 11, 12. Such passages as these, together with others, which speak of recommendatory letters, shew, that every christian has a right to know what persons are to be united to the church, and give their consent or objections, otherwise how can they obey the above injunctions? But the case of excluding members seems still more clearly stated. As in Matt. xviii. 15.—Where our Lord clearly shews, in so many words, that exclusion is the act of the church, and not the act of the minister, as an individual: the same is clear from the case of the incestuous person in the church of Corinth: 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, &c. &c. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person, 1 Cor. v.——Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted, not by the minister, but of many. So that contrarywise, ye ought rather to forgive—comfort him,' &c. Is any man

so blind as not to see, that the expulsion of this man was the act of *the whole church*? But to put this matter beyond a doubt, I will remark, that we read of one minister who acted as a lord over God's heritage, and he is pointed out as one that cast the brethren out of the church by his own authority. 'Diotrephes loveth to have the pre-eminence—Prateth against us with malicious words—Doth not receive the brethren—Forbiddeth them that would—Casteth them out of the church,' 3 John 9. This is such an infamous character, that one would think every minister would study to avoid it as much as possible. It was long after the apostles' days before the clergy arrogated to themselves all church power.——'No offenders were restored to the church's peace, without consent of the people; they were to plead their cause before all the people. None shall be received without the knowledge and consent of the people, Cyprian, Epistle x. § 4. p. 30. Epistle 59. § 1. p. 164. Origin describes an offender 'as appearing before the whole church,' Comment. on Matt. tom. 13. p. 335. vol. 1.——When the schism of Fellicissimus, in the bishopric of Carthage, was to be debated, 'It was to be done according to the will of the people, and by the consent of the laity: all these things shall be examined before them, and judged by them.' Ad. Plebem. Epist. xii. § 1. p. 37. and xl. § 7. p. 94. Time would fail me to quote the many passages from scripture, &c. that prove either in direct terms, or by fair inference and solid deduction, that the people, the deacons, and the bishop, elder, or presbyter, all joined together in managing church affairs, for at least 300 years after the apostles' times. From what I have observed, I think it will appear to every unprejudiced mind, that our discipline is far from being scriptural. I am, however, far from supposing our preachers, who rigorously maintain it, are unconverted, proud men. I believe the apostles were converted men, even when they were unreasonably contending for authority: and Christ told them, that the princes of the Gentiles exercised authority among them; but, said he, it shall not be so among you. In like manner, I believe our preachers in general are pious men, but I cannot think that it is piety or prudence that leads them so eagerly to grasp and maintain such an unlimited authority over the

the societies; but rather a want of consideration, mixed with a desire common to all men more or less.

I have seen a paragraph some where, which, with some little alteration, is partly applicable to us as a people:—

‘ The preachers should beware of neglecting or despising us (the people.) For if they once lose their interest in us, as they certainly will, if they are at no pains to preserve it, I would fain know what must become either of them or of us. As for us, I fear many of us would grow indifferent to all religion, and seldom appear among us or in any other place of worship; others of a warmer and more resolute temper, would find out ways of making the preachers uneasy, and if they could not get rid of them any other way, would draw off to other parties, or form new societies; and find out preachers agreeable to their own taste, who might think it prudent to maintain their discontent with those they had left. Thus our common interest as Methodists would moulder and crumble away by our divisions and animosities: And the preachers who, by their lordly conduct towards the people, had been the occasion of these divisions, shall have the great pleasure of being entertained by the echo of their own voices, and the delivery of their own discourses, in empty places, or amidst a little circle of ignorant friends, till perhaps they are at length *starved into a good opinion of compliance*; and in the mean time, shall have the honour of ruining the cause they undertook to support.’ Have not all the persecutions, martyrdoms, and divisions which have disgraced and destroyed the christian church, been occasioned by this single evil? namely, assuming an authority to judge for another; and to force him, not by arguments, but by violence, as far as power can go, to profess a creed he did not believe; or submit to a discipline he did not approve. I am dissatisfied with the authority exercised over me, not because I disrespect the persons of our preachers (God is my witness, I love them above any body of men whatever) least of all from unwillingness to yield subjection, where I apprehend Christ has enjoined it; for so far as I know my heart, it would be my joy to bow with all humility to any authority delegated by him: But my unwillingness to yield unlimited obedience, is founded on this, That I assuredly believe the contrary to what the discipline of our societies as now explained, requires me to believe as true. I there

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fore choose rather to state my sentiments openly and plainly, than hypocritically to say I approve what I cannot; although at present I see no choice but that of—*submit* or *separate*: yet I hope the good sense of our people will lead them to unite together as one body, to obtain their just rights: more especially as the preachers have publicly declared themselves *eminently one body*, (See Minutes, page 29.) apparently in contra-distinction from us; *the people*. This declaration, I suppose, is the work of a few leading men; for I cannot think that in general the preachers approve of it, or of every part of our constitution. Thirteen of them have published their willingness and their wish to unite the people with them, in the management of affairs. Come forward, friends, in this good cause: let us all have one purse.—I believe it must be the case *literally*. For as the preachers have declared in the Minutes, that they are *eminently one body*, let us learn wisdom from them; and prove, that if they thus discard and despise us, we will join together, and show ourselves *eminently one body*; in which every member feels for and strengthens the other: So that none, no not the head, may say to the feet,—‘I have no need of you.’

Having pointed out what I conceive to be the cause of our divisions, viz. An undue unscriptural power, claimed and exercised by our preachers:—Let us join the courage of the lion—the wisdom of the serpent—and the harmlessness of the dove together, that every grievance may be speedily redressed; and that if any speak evil of us they may be ashamed.

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METHODIST MONITOR.

To the Editor of the MONITOR.

SIR,

AFTER allowing for the mistakes and infirmities of those, connected with the subjects lately agitated amongst the Methodists, christian charity leads us to hope, that one principal cause of the contention, has arisen from an inattention to the directions of scripture; an evil great in itself, and sufficient to humble all parties, yet not to leave us without encouragement to hope, that a due attention to them in future, will remove our disorders.

It has been said, 'That the Methodists are ruled without being consulted, in the choice and exclusion of their officers and members—formation of their own laws—distribution of their own property—and that this is the great source of all our contentions.' Without determining at present how far this is the case, it may not be unacceptable to your readers to show, that *they ought not*. So many proofs occur in the New Testament to show, that *mutual deliberation*, and *christian submission*, are the great bonds of religious society; that it appears a pleasing and profitable task, to show the plain directions of the scriptures on each subject which has been altercated. The remaining part of this letter will be taken up, with some remarks, which appear sufficiently to prove, '*That no members should be admitted into a religious society, in opposition to the judgment of a majority of that society.*'

In order to state this in a clear light, let us survey the nature of a religious society—the purposes for which it subsists—the relation its members bear to each other—and the privileges they enjoy. It is a voluntary society, formed by mutual agreement, Acts ii. 44, 46. Rom. xv. 6, 7. Isa. lxiv. 5. Its members profess the same general articles of faith and order, Eph. iv. 5. 1 Cor. i. 10. 2 Cor. ix, 13. They submit to the same token of devotion to Christ, Eph. iv. 5. Acts viii. 12.—xxviii. 19. Gal. iii. 27. They give themselves to the Lord and to one another, 2 Cor. viii. 5. Rom. xv. 7. Acts v. 14. They meet together at one time and in one place, for religious worship, as frequently and constantly as may be necessary

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to answer the ends of public religion, 1 Cor. xiv. 23.—Heb. x. 25.

The very essence, or principal thing in religious fellowship, consists in its professors partaking of the same spirit and grace, 1 Cor. vi. 17. John i. 16. Rom. viii. 9.—Isa. lix. 21. Standing in the same relation to Christ, Gal. iii. 28. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Rom. xii. 5.—viii. 17.—Enjoying his spiritual presence in the same ordinances, and performing the same common duties, with unity of heart, 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. Acts i. 14.—ii. 42.—iv. 32. Matt. xxviii. 20. 1 Cor. x. 3. In the expectation of the same glorious immortality, Eph. iv. 5. Col. i. 17. Tit. ii. 13. Heb. iii. 1. Gal. v. 5.

The chief ends of a religious union are, the preservation of the faith, worship, and blessings of the gospel, in their power and purity, Rom. iii. 2. Phil. i. 27. 1 Cor. ii. 2. The support of the public ministry for conversion and edification, Eph. iv. 11, 12. Ps. lxxxvii. 5. 1 Peter i. 23, 25. The manifesting the grace and glory of God in the world, Eph. iii. 10, 21. Rev. i. 20.

It may be justly inquired, How any of these purposes can be answered by members being forced into a religious society, by the influence of individuals? Can a community, where such cases are numerous, be called a *voluntary* society? Can they with one mouth glorify God? Can they be perfectly joined together in one judgment? Can they manifest unanimity in their profession of one baptism? Can they yield themselves to each other in the Lord? Are they likely to manifest, that they have all received grace from one over-flowing fountain?—That they are one in Christ—partakers of the same spiritual bread—looking together for one blessed hope—and striving together for the faith of the gospel?

Is it likely they will enjoy the privileges of religious fellowship? Will they see the glory and power of God in their sanctuary? Ps. lviii. 2.—lxxxiv. 2.—lxv. 4. Will they be gathered together in the name of the Lord?—Matt. xviii. 20. Are they subjects of such promises as are contained in Psalm lxxxvii. 2.—cxxxii. 15.—xcii. 13, 14. Isa. lix. 21. 2 Cor. vi. 16.

We have many intimations, that an avowed union with
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a lively and holy people, is a strong motive to a close walk with God ; but will not this be wanting in a disunited society ? 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.—vi. 19. Judges xi. 35. Ps. lvi. 12.—lxvi. 11. Deut. xxiii. 21, 22. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Can the members of such societies consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works ? Heb. x. 24. Ps. xlv. 5. James v. 16. Will they maintain that spirit of liberality and benevolence implied in Acts ii. 44. Matt. xxvi. 11. Gal. ii. 10 ? Can they properly unite in any exercise of public devotion ? Can they, with one accord, offer unto God prayer and praise ? 1 Tim. ii. 8. Phil. iv. 6. Ps. l. 14. Acts xii. 5. Eph. v. 19.

Does not a review of these considerations prove, that if members are admitted into religious societies by the influence of individuals, in opposition to the judgment of a major part, it is at once contrary to the direction of the scriptures, and destructive to the interests of religion ? The form of godliness may remain, but christianity and brotherly love must be destroyed. Of so much consequence is it, that no preacher, or number of preachers should claim a distinct right to admit or exclude members, that the societies should not submit to it, if claimed by individuals. *It is a claim founded in error ; nor need more be said to show its source and tendency, because it contradicts the laws of Christ.* We think no apology need be made for reprobating such a principle. The more earnestly it is contended for, the more determinately it ought to be rejected.—Love of peace teaches christians to yield much ; but when it would lead them to betray the Redeemer's interests, and oppose his laws, it is at best but deserting our Lord when he is attacked by his enemies, if it is not a betraying the Son of Man with a kiss.

Let it be remarked, that these reflections are no farther applicable to the preachers and rules of conference than they claim a power distinct from the people. If they do, these remarks are thought applicable to such claims, and necessary to be made. If no such claims are made, they cannot injure the characters of the preachers, with judicious and candid minds. It ought to be observed, that no question is introduced here as to the *manner of admitting members* ; if a society do not controvert the qualifications of those admitted, they give their consent by whomsoever it is done.

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We have only farther to observe, that the arrangement of the scriptures on the preceding subject, are an extract from a valuable publication. If these find a place in the Monitor, you may expect to hear again from,

O.

CAUTIONS

Proper for a Penitent, who desires to make his Calling and Election SURE.

Extracted from FLETCHER'S APPEAL.

WHEN thou hast affecting views of thy lost estate, beware of resting, like Felix, in some pangs of fear, fits of trembling, and resolutions of turning to God by and bye, *when thou shalt have a convenient season*. Neither give place to desponding thoughts, as if there was no appeal from the tribunal of justice to the throne of grace.

Run not for ease to vain company, bodily indulgence, entangling affections, immoderate sleep, excessive drinking, or hurry of business. *Cain built a city* to divert his trouble of mind, and multitudes like him, by *the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, or the desire of other things*, daily choke the good seed, the precious word of conviction, Mark iv. 19.

Be not satisfied with faint desires of living the life of the righteous, or idle wishes of dying their death. Remember, that *the desire of the slothful kills him*: and if thou hast experienced some drawings of grace, meltings of heart, or breathings after God, sit not down at last as the Laodiceans, in a careless state, *neither hot nor cold*. It is far better to go on thy way weeping, and seeking *the pearl of great price*, till thou really find it, than to rest contented with an hasty conceit that thou art possessed of it, when thou art not.

Stop not in an outward reformation, and a form of godliness, like many, who mistake the means or *doctrines of grace* for grace itself; and because they say their heartless

prayers both in public and private, or go far and often to hear the gospel preached in its purity, fondly hope that they are favourites of God, and in the highway to heaven.

Under pretence of increasing thy convictions, do not bury them in heaps of religious books. Some read till their heads are confused, or their hearts *past feeling*.—Thus, though *ever learning, they are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*. Hear, then, as well as read the word of life; but think not thyself converted when thou hast *received it with joy*; the stony ground hearers went as far as this: Herod himself *heard John gladly, honoured him, did many things*, but left the most important undone. For he never dismissed the incestuous woman he lived with; and at last sacrificed to her revenge, the honest preacher he once admired.

Do not confound *the covenant of works* made with *innocent Adam* before the fall, and *the covenant of grace* made with *sinful Adam* after the fall, Gen. ii. 17.—iii. 15. Rom. v. 11—21. They are excellent in their place, but when they are mixed together, they destroy each others efficacy. The dreadful thunders heard in paradise lost; and the melodious songs uttered in paradise regained, do not strike *at once* the same spiritual ear. The galling yoke of the covenant of works, and the heavy load of its condemnation are dropt; when we take upon us Christ's easy yoke, submit to his light burden. In a word, the first Adam gives place to the second, when we *find rest to our souls*. Let then the curse of the law of innocence, be swallowed up by the blessing of the gospel: or rather, let it make way for the grace of Christ in thy soul, as an emetic makes way for a cordial in a disordered stomach. If thou takest them together, their respective use is prevented. The first covenant loses its *humbling* efficacy, and the second its *restorative* power. Therefore, if thou hast really received *the sentence of death in thyself*, leave the curse of the first covenant in the grace of Christ, *crucified for thy sins*; and welcome the pardoning, renovating grace of Christ, *risen again for thy justification*.

On the other hand, rest not contented with speculative knowledge, and inaffecting, though clear ideas of the gospel-way of salvation. Light in an unrenewed understand-

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ing, mistaken for *the mystery of faith in a pure heart*, like an *ignis fatuus*, or false light, leads thousands through the bog of sin, into the pit of destruction, Acts viii. 13.

Pacify not thy conscience by activity in outward services, and a warmth in God's cause: party spirit, or a natural headiness in carrying on a favourite scheme, yea, or seeking thy own glory, may be the springs that fet thee on work. Jehu faithfully destroyed Baal and Jezebel, but his zeal for the Lord covered the secret desire for a crown.—Take care also, not to mistake gifts for graces; fluency of speech for converting power; the warmth of natural affection for divine love; or an impulse of God's Spirit on some particular occasion, for an evidence of spiritual regeneration. Balaam spoke and prophesied like a child of God, and *many will say one day to Christ, Lord, have we not prophesied, spoke all mysteries, cast out devils, and done many wonderful works in thy name; to whom he will answer, Depart from me, for I know you not.*

Avoid the self-conceit of many, who feed on the corrupted manna of their past experiences, and confidently appeal to the wasted streams of those consolations, which once refreshed their hearts; when, alas! it is evident, *they have now forsaken the fountain of living water; and hewn to themselves broken cisterns that hold no water; unless the mire of evil tempers, selfish views, and heartless professions of faith, may pass for the streams which gladden the city of God.*

Neither do thou heal thyself by touches of sorrow, by tears, good desires, or outward marks of humiliation for sin, as King Ahab. Nor by excessive fasting, retiring from business, or hard usage of the body, as the Roman Catholics: nor yet by misapplying the doctrine of predestination, and setting down notions of election for evidences of salvation, as many Protestants: No, nor by *doating about questions, strifes of words, and perverse disputings, which eat as a canker*, as some in St. Paul's days, and too many in our's, 1 Tim. iv. 4.

To conclude: Think not that thou art absolutely made whole when the power of outward sin is weakned or suspended, when thou hast learned the language of Canaan, canst speak or write well on spiritual subjects, art intimately acquainted with the best ministers of Christ, and has cast
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thy lot among the despised children of God, taken their part, shared in their reproach, and secured their esteem and prayers. Judas did so for many years : *Saul was once also among the prophets* : Ananias and Sapphira were supposed to be good believers for a time. the foolish virgins joined in society with the wise, and perhaps were unsuspected till the last ; and Peter himself stood in need of conversion, long after he had outwardly left all to follow Christ, Luke xxii. 32. So important is that charge of our Lord's, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

Are thy sins really grievous to thee ? Is the burthen of them intolerable ? Wouldst thou part with it at any rate ? Dost thou fully renounce thy barren and speculative faith ? Hast thou received the sentence of eternal death in thy conscience, acknowledging thy case (for any thing thou canst do without Christ) helpless, hopeless, desperate ? And art thou truly brought to the grand enquiry, *What must I do to be saved ?* See, feel, confess, that thou standest in absolute need of the Divine Physician, an Almighty Redeemer ; and, that the God-Man, Jesus Christ, joins both those extraordinary characters in his wonderful person. Submit to be saved by grace, by free grace, through his infinite merits, and not thy wretched deserts ; and instead of opposing, continually study God's wonderful method of saving sinners, the worst of sinners, *by faith* in his blood.

When thou art once convinced of unbelief, do not increase the difficulty of believing, by imagining true faith at an immense distance. Consider it as very near thy heart. That which convinces thee of sin and unbelief can, in a moment, and with the greatest ease, convince thee of righteousness, and *reveal in thee Christ, the hope of glory.*—How quickly can the Spirit take of the things that belong to him, and shew them unto thee ! Say not then in thy heart, *Who shall ascend into heaven, or descend into the deep, to get the seed of faith ?* But let St. Paul show thee the new and living way. *The word is nigh thee (says he) even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach ; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved ;*

for we are saved by faith; faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Hear then the word of the Lord; There is no name but his under heaven whereby we must be saved; neither is there cure or salvation in any other, Acts iv. 12. As by him all things were created, so by him they subsist, and by him they must be restored. — The power of his word and breath, made man a living soul; and now that we are dead to God, the same power applying his blood and righteousness, must create in us clean hearts, and renew right spirits within us. This, and this only heals wounded consciences, washes polluted souls, and raises the dead in trespasses and sins.

THE FOLLOWING LETTER,

Was sent to Mr. ———, but returned under a blank cover. As several persons appear hurt at Mr. Mather's declaration in the leaders' meeting, and cannot be informed of the particulars relative to the business, without their being printed; I think it my duty to make them public, for the benefit of the friends.

To Mr. ———, Steward of the Methodist Society, Manchester.

Dear Sir,

THOUGH I am persuaded you differ from me in sentiment in many things, yet I am encouraged to hope, that you will have sufficient resolution to read this letter, in the leaders' meeting to-morrow evening, should any person venture to oppose. Wishing you every blessing necessary for your present and eternal happiness,

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate servant,

ALEXANDER KILHAM.

To the Leaders and Stewards of the Methodist Society, in Manchester.

SALFORD, 4th Jan. 1797.

Dear Brethren,

ON my return from Staffordshire, last night, I was surprized to hear that Mr. Mather had been charging me

me with notorious falsehoods, respecting what I have published on the Barber's bill, at the conference in Bristol, and in Manchester.

The following particulars will state the subject in a true light:—

I. Either on the first or second day of the conference, held in London last year, it was proposed for something to be done to prevent the Barber's bill from being as large as it had formerly been. Mr. Bradburn stood up and declared, that in Bristol, 1794, the bill was either about or above twenty pounds. Mr. Mather stood up at the same time and informed us, it was about the same in Manchester. Their declarations were not made in a corner, but in the conference.

II. The preachers were exceedingly surprized, and could scarcely think it possible, that such a sum could be lavished away in shaving, &c. We spoke of it to each other when the meeting concluded, and could not account how the money could be honestly expended.

III. I apprehend, there is not a preacher, who was present, if he were attending to the business, but what heard all that passed on the subject, and will have more grace than deny, that Messrs. Mather and Bradburn made such declarations, at the time alluded to.—Mr. Samuel Bardley stood up about the same time, and begged of the preachers to be careful what they said, otherwise they might expect that I should publish it.—I kept an account of this matter, and told several of the preachers it would make a fine article, should they force me to publish again.

Upon this subject I would intreat you to remark:—

1. Mr. Mather has been so long in the habit of using words which will mean several things, that he may be able to explain away the declaration he made use of in the conference: or he might include many things in the words "Barber's Bill," without giving us the particulars. This is according to what he and his brethren have published in the minutes. They declare, so much was expended for sickness in the different circuits: For instance, the minutes inform us, that fourteen pounds one shilling were paid for sickness for Wigan circuit last year; and in that circuit declare, there were only about

about eight shillings paid for a doctor's bill. Examine Ripon, Whitby, Stockton, Hexham, and a vast number of the circuits, and you will find many things included in the word *Sickness*. Mr. Mather being one that helped in fixing that word at the head of a column, which *hangs out false colours to the people*, might he not, in the same manner, include many things in what he calls "Barber's bill?"

2. Though only about seven pounds ten shillings may be down in the society-book for that bill, is there nothing down for it in the conference-book? If I mistake not, a collection was made among the preachers for it, as has been the case in many conferences. If that was done, have the stewards that contribution in their book?

3. I appeal to all your consciences, whether or not the preachers could have been so much surprized, and grieved, at the last conference, as they were, if Mr. Mather had told them the bill was only about seven pounds ten shillings, according to the account in your book?—Because they knew more of the brethren were present than usual, and that the conference continued longer than it generally does. There were upwards of two hundred preachers present. If fifty of us in general shaved ourselves, a shilling a-piece for the rest, including dressing hair and wigs, could not be considered a very extravagant sum.

Upon the whole, I hold myself in readiness to meet Mr. Mather at the bar of the public, on this or any other subject, whenever he comes forward, openly, to deny what I have written. If he attempts to explain away, in print, his own words, or to put a new construction on them, I have no doubt, but that *honest, undisguised truth*, will prevail, against all the schemes that sophistry can invent, to hinder its progress.—And, if ever there should be a period, when you, as leaders and stewards, *dare read and think for yourselves*, you will help in removing the evils that threaten the ruin of methodism, and not be hindered by the influence of any *man, or number of men*, from claiming the privileges which belong to you, as the followers of Christ.

I am, dear brethren,

Your affectionate servant,

ALEXANDER KILHAM.

ON PATIENCE.

From an old Author.

Patience, is a holy behaviour in affliction; a rectitude of mind under a cross; a heart moving by the word of God, when whipt by the hand of God. Patience is a soul enjoying itself in every condition.

Patience, is an even sea in all winds; a serene soul in all weathers; a thread even spun, with every wheel of providence; it is a soul above extremes, neither in excess, nor in defect; neither over-sensible, nor under-sensible of any affliction: neither without tears, nor without hope; neither murmuring nor presuming; neither despising chastisement, nor fainting when corrected. Affected with all; cast down with nothing: quiet when tossed, very quiet while extremely tossed; expecting his salvation from God, when none can be had from man.

Patience, it is a soul at rest; a soul daily at rest in God. Wives gone, substance gone, houses plundered, Ziglag burnt, all mourning, many murmuring, ready to stone and kill David; and yet he makes up all in God, and is at rest; this is patience. Patience, it is Jacob sleeping heartily upon a stone; a heart at rest in hardships: it is a poor widow, cheerfully giving and obeying a prophet, though but a little meal in the barrel, and but a little oil in the cruse; it is one cheerfully going to eat her last provision and die; it is one quietly going up to take a view of Canaan, and die at the door, making death, life; Christ, Canaan. It is one going to sacrifice an only son, with a—*God will provide.* Patience can speak no worse divinity, in the greatest strait; it is one breathing out a soul at rest, in the face of the cruelest misery—*Not my will, but thy will be done.* If this cup may not pass, let my blood pass; if this cause cannot live, without I die, let me die; let money go, let life go, that Christ may stay, the will of Christ may be done. *Let the will of the Lord be done, this is a patient man's—Amen.*—All runs into this, *That patience is a holy behaviour in affliction.*—*Let patience have its perfect work.*

No. VIII.

THE
Methodist Monitor.

“ Let no injustice be done to any description of persons among us. Let the *preachers* assemble in conference, the *trustees* of our chapels, the *leaders* and *stewards* of our societies, and all the people stand in their proper places, and have their due share of power and regard. We invite all our brethren, *preachers, stewards, leaders, trustees, and private members*, throughout Great Britain and Ireland, to meet and unite with us in one *noble and great* effort, to preserve the unity of a body, which has already proved an infinite blessing to so many myriads of people.”—*Messrs. Mather, Thompson, and Benson's printed Letter.*

Robinson's Preface to the Third Volume of Savin's Sermons.

(Concluded from Page 245.)

NO divine will dispute the truth of this proposition, God gave Jesus Christ to believers ; for it is demonstrable in the text. To this, therefore, Beza and Zanchy, Melancthon and Luther, Calvin and Arminius, Baxter and Crisp agree, all allowing it a christian doctrine : but, each associating with the idea of gift other ideas of time—place—relation—condition—and so on, explains the doctrine so as to contain all his own additional ideas.

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One class of expositors take the idea of time, and by it explain the proposition. God and believers, says one, are to be considered contemplatively before the creation in the light of Creator and creatures, abstracted from all moral considerations whatever; then God united Christ to his church in the pure mass of creatureship, without the contemplation of Adam's fall. Another affirms, God gave a Saviour to men in *design*, *before* the existence of creatures: but in full contemplation, however, of the misery induced by the fall. A third says, God gave Christ to believers, not in purpose before the fall: but in promise immediately after it. A fourth adds, God gives Christ to believers *on their believing*, by putting them in possession of the benefits of christianity. In all these systems, the ideas of God, Christ, believers, and gift remain, the pure genuine ideas of the text; and the association of time distinguisheth and varieth the systems.

A second class of expositors take the idea of relation, and one affirms, God and believers are to be considered in the relative light of governor and subjects, the characters of a perfect government are discernible in the giving of a Saviour, justice vindicates the honour of government by punishing some, mercy displays the benefit of government by pardoning others, and royal prerogative both disculpates and elevates the guilty; however, as the governor is a God, he retains and displays his absolute right of dispensing his favours as he pleases. A second says, God and believers are to be considered in the light of parent and children, and Christ is not given to believers according to mere maxims of exact government; but he is bestowed by God, the common Father, impartially on all his children. A third says, God and believers are to be considered in the light of master and servants, and God rewards the imperfect services of his creatures with the rich benefits of christianity. A fourth considers God and believers in the relation of king and consort, and say, God gave christianity as an inalienable dowry to his chosen associate. In all these systems, God, Christ, believers, and gift remain, the pure genuine ideas of the text, and the association of the idea of relation distinguishes and varies the systems.

In general, we form ideas of the Supreme Being, and we think, such a being ought to act so and so, and therefore

therefore we conclude he does act so and so. God gives Christ to believers conditionally, says one, for so it becomes a holy being to bestow all his gifts. God gives Christ unconditionally, says another, for so it becomes a merciful being to bestow his gifts on the miserable. I repeat it again, opposite as these may appear, they both retain the notions of the same God, the same Jesus, the same believers, the same giving: but an idea concerning *the fittest way of bestowing* the gift distinguishes and varies the systems. I call it the same giving, because all divines, even they who go most into a scheme of conditional salvation, allow, that Christ is a blessing infinitely beyond all that is due to the conditions which they perform in order to their enjoyment of him.

Let us for a moment suppose, that this proposition, God gives Christ to believers, is the whole of revelation on this subject. A divine, who should affirm, that his ideas of time, relation, and condition were necessarily contained in this scripture; that his whole thesis was a doctrine of christianity; and that the belief of it was essential to salvation; would affirm the most palpable absurdities; for, although the proposition does say, Christ is God's gift to believers, yet it does neither say *when* God bestowed this gift, nor why he bestowed it, nor that a precise knowledge of the *mode* of donation is essentially requisite to salvation. That God gave the world a Saviour in the person of Jesus is a fact affirmed by Christ in this proposition, and therefore a christian doctrine. That he made the donation absolutely or conditionally, before the fall or after it, reversibly or irrevocably, the proposition doth not affirm; and therefore every proposition including any of these ideas is an article of belief containing a christian doctrine and an human explication, and consequently it lies before an examiner in different degrees of evidence and importance.

Suppose a man were required to believe this proposition, God gave Jesus to believers absolutely; or this, God gave Jesus to believers conditionally; it is not impossible, the whole proposition might be proved original, genuine, primary doctrine of Jesus Christ. Our proposition in this text could not prove it, and were this the whole of our information on this article, conditionality and unconditionality would be human explications: but, if Christ have given us in any other part of revelation, more

instruction on this subject ; if he any where affirm, either that he was given on certain conditions to be performed by believers, or that he was not given so, then indeed we might associate the ideas of one text with those of another, and so form of the whole a genuine christian doctrine.

When we have thus selected the instructions of our divine Master from the opinions of our fellow-pupils, we should suppose, these questions would naturally arise, Is a belief of all the doctrines of Christ essential to salvation? If not, which are the essential truths? If the parable of the talents be allowed a part of his doctrine, and if the doctrine of proportion taught in that parable be true, it should seem, the belief of christian doctrines must be proportioned to exterior evidence and interior ability ; and, on these principles, should a congregation of five hundred christians put these questions, they must receive five hundred different answers. *Who is sufficient for these things?* Let us renounce our inclination to damn our fellow-creatures. Let us excite all to faith and repentance, and let us leave the decision of their destiny to Almighty God. *When Christ cometh he will tell us all things*, John iv. 25. till then let us wait, lest we should scatter *fire-brands, arrows and death*, and *make the hearts of the righteous sad, whom the Lord hath not made sad*, Prov. xxvi. 18. 19. Ezek. xiii. 22. How many doctrines are essential to salvation, seems to me exactly such a question as, How much food is essential to animal life?

We will venture to go a step further. Were we as capable of determining the exact ratio between any particular mind and a given number of ideas, as we are of determining how many feet of water a vessel of a given burden must draw ; and were we able so to determine how much faith in how many doctrines was essential to the holiness, and so to the happiness of such a soul ; we shall not then entertain a vain notion of exacting by force the rights of God of his creature. For, first, the same proportion, which renders a certain number of ideas essential to the happiness of an intelligent mind, renders this number of ideas so clear, that they establish themselves and need no imposition. Secondly, the nature of faith does not admit of imposition ; it signifies nothing to say, Kings command it ; if angels commanded it, they would require an impossibility, and exact that of me, which they themselves

selves could not perform. Thirdly, God has appointed no means to enforce belief, he has nominated no vicegerents to do this, he has expressly forbidden the attempt. Fourthly, the means, that one man must employ to impose his creed on another, are all nefarious, and damn a sinner to make a saint. Fifthly, imposition of human creeds has produced so much mischief in the world, so many divisions among christians, and so many execrable actions, attended with no one good end to religion, that the repetition of this crime would argue a soul infested with the grossest ignorance, or the most stubborn obstinacy imaginable. Sixthly, dominion over conscience is that part of God's empire, of which he is most jealous. The imposition of a human creed is a third action, and before any man can perform it, he must do two other exploits, he must usurp the throne, and claim the slave. How many more reasons might be added! From a cool examination of the nature of God—the nature of man—the nature of christianity—the nature of all powers within the compass of human thought to employ—the history of past times—the state of the present—in a word, of every idea, that belongs to the imposition of a human creed, we venture to affirm, the attempt is irrational, unscriptural, impracticable, impossible. Creed is belief, and the production of belief by penal sanctions neither is, nor was, nor is to come. The project never entered the mind of a professor of any science, except that of theology. It is high time, theologians should explode it. The glorious pretence of establishing by force implicit belief should be left to the little tyrant of a country school; let him lay down dry documents, gird false rules close about other men's sons, lash docility into vanity, stupidity, or madness, and justify his violence by spluttering, *Sic volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas*.

Were christians sincere in their professions of moderation, candour, and love, they would settle this preliminary article of *imposition*, and, this given up, there would be nothing else to dispute. Our objections lie neither against surplice nor service-book; but against the imposition of them. Let one party of christians worship God as their consciences direct: but let other parties forfeit nothing for doing the same. It may appear conjectural: but it is sincerely true, theological war is the most futile and expensive contest, theological peace the cheapest acquisition in the world.

Although the distinction of a divine revelation from human explication is just and necessary, although the principles of analogy, proportion and perfection, are undeniable, and although, considered as a theory, the nature and necessity of universal toleration will be allowed to be as clear and demonstrative as possible, yet, we are well aware, the allowance of these articles in all their fair, just, necessary consequences would be so inimical to many dispositions, and so effectually subversive of so many selfish interested systems, that we entertain no hopes of ever seeing the theory generally reduced to practice. Heaven may exhibit a scene of universal love, and it is glorious to christianity to propose it; it is an idea replete with extatic joy, and, thanks be to God, it is more than an idea, it is a law in many christian churches, alas! little known, and less imitated by the rest of their brethren. There is a remnant of Jacob in the midst of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men, Micah v. 7. These may chearfully adopt the prophet's exultation, *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy! If I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me, he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness*, chap. vii. 8. *In the day, that my walls are to be built, in that day shall human decrees concerning conscience be far removed*, ver. 11.

I have only to add my sincere prayers to the God of all grace, that he may enable us all to *put on this armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in this evil day, and, having done all, to stand; for we wrestle against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*, Eph. vi. 11, 12, 13. May he grant, that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, Eph. iv. 14, 15. **SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE, may we grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ, to whom alone be DOMINION OVER CONSCIENCE for ever and ever! AMEN.**

To the Editor of the MONITOR.

SIR,

IMPARTIALITY in exposing Error, and *patiently to persevere* in attempting to remove Abuses, demands no small degree of praise. The abilities of some of the wisest and best of men, have been employed in this landable undertaking, whose zeal and integrity we cannot call to mind without particular regard for their characters. Abuses become habitual, when we have been long accustomed to view them with indifferency, and form unto themselves a kind of unalienable right to reign without controul. A feeble opposition will go but a little way towards destroying what is fortified with *self-interest and prejudice*; and we can scarce expect a *radical cure*, without removing the cause of corruption, at a decisive blow.

As you avow yourself a friend to the interests of Methodism, in pleading the rights of the people, in the choice of their own affairs, &c. is there nothing wants rectifying among the preachers themselves, worthy your notice, which you have not sufficiently explained? Is there no partiality in their appointment to the circuits? If not, why do a number of preachers keep going in a regular rotation to the best circuits in the kingdom? Suppose they have no other thing in view than to be useful, are there not other of their brethren, equal to them in abilities, that might be as useful to the people, and equally acceptable? There is certainly a great difference between one circuit and another, in their weekly allowance, servant wages, washing, &c. and those preachers who have families must feel it very sensibly. There are some circuits where the preacher is not at home more than four nights in a month, according to the regular plan, and their families receive only about six or seven shillings a month for their board; though, perhaps, by going from neighbouring places after they have preached and met the society, they are three or four times as much at home, without any allowance for the extra nights. While in other circuits the married preachers receive, either for themselves or their colleagues, that board with them, regularly, ten, twelve, fifteen, or twenty-one shillings a week, for their board *only*, throughout the year.

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There is another evil equally as glaring as it is oppressive, the monopolizing the profits of the books by the assistants, which are sold in the different circuits. The assistants (as they are improperly called) find it their interest, to get, if possible, to the circuits where there is a large demand for magazines, &c. and as they have ten per cent. clear money, allowed for selling, (the letters and parcels are paid by the book-room) many preachers receive from five to twelve pounds income from this quarter. I think this is a very great hardship upon the other preachers, who are entirely deprived of any advantage, though they are called to go round the circuit, with their bags stuffed, ready to burst the seams, while their unfeeling assistants pocket all the profits, without saying, "here's half a guinea for your trouble." Nay, some of them have caused their colleagues who purchased books of them, *to pay the uttermost farthing*, making gain of the *very persons*, who were wearing out their bags, &c. in their service. There may be an exception here and there; but the number is very small—perhaps not one in forty. What reason there can be assigned for this inequality, those that have been in office may be able to explain. It surely cannot be that it requires great skill in figures, or knowledge in keeping accounts. If this were asserted, it would be no great task to prove, that many who are honoured with the lucrative post of assistantship, have no great skill in these, and are entirely ignorant of the plain method of book-keeping. Neither can it be maintained, that their abilities are superior to those of their colleagues, either in point of preaching or managing the circuit. There are indeed some, who from their second or third year of trial, commence assistants, and have continued in that station for a number of years.—This is not to be wondered at, when it is considered, that they can put five, ten, or more pounds into their pocket, which, were they in the same place with their colleagues, they would not be admitted to touch. I think the preachers ought to be at equal trouble, and share equally in the profits; at least all that are in full connexion. In short, there is no advantage but what ought to be mutually enjoyed, unless what arises from a man's superior labour and usefulness. The subject might be considerably enlarged upon, but at present I shall conclude. Perhaps these hints may stimulate some of your much abler correspondents to investigate it more fully. I remain, your's affectionately,

Nov. 18, 1796. VERE.

P. S. The following Extracts may be both acceptable and useful, if you can give them a place in the Monitor.

"AS time and experience are necessary to bring all things to perfection, so the doctrine of the Lutheran church changed, by degrees, its original form, and was improved and perfected. The glorious defenders of religious liberty, to whom we owe the various blessings of the reformation, could not at once behold the truth in all its lustre, and in all its extent. But they were greatly assisted both in correcting, and illustrating all the articles of their faith, partly by the controversies they were obliged to carry on with the Roman Catholic doctors, and the disciples of Zuingli and Calvin, and partly by their intestine divisions."

Jebb's 3d vol. page 203, 204.

"*LOVE is a perfect bond.* St. Paul here decides a question, which is one of the most important to the happiness of the Christian church. Sin divides, and so destroys mankind. Christianity proposes to associate and unite men. The question is, by what common *bond* does it propose this? St. Paul says, by *Love*. The history of the whole Christian church, yea, that of the whole world, will prove, that union by any other bond is impracticable, and that union by this is perfect, and answers every worthy and desirable end.

"Some have attempted to form a Christian union on a sentimental plan; but a sentimental union is impracticable. As long as the capacities, the ages, the acquirements, the opportunities, and the graces of Christians differ, so long will sentimental union be impossible. What creeds, confessions, subscriptions, and oaths can do towards *uniformity of faith*, the world has thoroughly seen. Some have tried a *ceremonial* union; but unless the judgment be first subdued, the practice of the exterior ritual must be mere hypocrisy. Can hypocrisy and drudgery unite mankind? Some again have tried a *professional* union. A man must profess to believe what he does not believe, to approve of reasons that he has not examined, and to live by rules and canons which he never saw, never will see, nor would obey were he to see them. This plan is the destruction of every noble sentiment that can adorn the human soul."--*Id. p. 233.*

"Let a divine adopt what system he will, if he choose any on his own examination, I venerate him; But I have no patience with those, who cover their own stupidity, pride,

pride, or laziness, with a pretended humble acquiescence in the unexamined opinions of men, who very probably never examined their own opinions themselves, but professed those which lay nearest at hand, and best suited their base secular interests. My soul come not thou into their secrets."—*Ibid.* page 428.

— "This fact is more than tenable, it is invincible. Grant us *vox populi vox Dei*; only allow the PEOPLE to be the source of power, and we have a with equal to that of Archimedes, and as much more glorious, as the dignity of directing the world of spirits is superior to that of guiding the motion of matter. Farewell popery, prelacy, presbytery, I have understanding as well as you. Thy Creator gave me ability to judge for myself. Thy Redeemer brought a charter from Heaven to confirm my right in doing so, and gave me a rule to guide the exercise of my right. In the exercise of this right I may be holy and happy. The universe can do no more for me."—*ib.* p. 37.

"Before any man or set of men, presume to enjoin an article of faith to be believed by Christians, or a ceremony to be performed by them, a right to exercise this power ought to be produced. Some say the *Pope* has it; some place it in *Christian kings*; some in a *synod*; some in what they call the *church*: But to all we apply what a good writer says of the *Pope's* supremacy:—"The disagreement of doctors about the nature and extent of this authority, is a shrewd prejudice against it. If a man should sue for a piece of land, and his advocates, (the notablest that could be had, and well paid) could not find where it lieth, and how it is butted and bounded, and from whom it was conveyed to him, one would be very apt to suspect his title. If God had instituted such an office, it is highly probable we might satisfactorily know what the nature and use of it were; the patents and charters for it would declare it."—For want of right, men have availed themselves of power. What a church champion says of popish supremacy, is too true:—"The *Pope's* supremacy is not only indefensible, but an impudent cause as ever was undertaken by learned pens." And nothing could have kept it so long from becoming ridiculous in the judgment of mankind, but its being so strongly supported by worldly interest. There is not one tolerable argument for it. The *Pope's* Janizaries boldly assert, and stily contend for it without reason."

Bishop Tillotson's Preface to Burrow.

"— Here we are constrained to acknowledge, that priestcraft hath too much prevailed in every period of the christian church, and among all the different sects and parties that compose it. Men of corrupt minds and covetous dispositions, have, not unfrequently, crept into the sacred ministry for the sake of the loaves and fishes.— "Put me into the priest's office that I may get a piece of bread," has more than once been the cry, to the great scandal and disgrace of the church of Christ. But though truth obliges us to confess thus much, we are constrained by the same truth to acknowledge, that this has not always been the case. Many have undertaken the arduous task of preaching the gospel, from pure and disinterested motives, and who would not, knowingly and deliberately, contribute to maintain a system of spiritual tyranny, for the sake of any human considerations whatever." *Rev. Dr. Simpson's Sacred Literature, Vol. 1. Page 9.*

"The principal source of those deplorable dissensions which divided first, the eastern church into various sects, and afterwards entirely separated it from that of the west—He will find, that these flowed chiefly from the unchristian contentions for dominion, which reigned among those who set themselves up for the fathers of the church."—*WESLEY's Ecclesiastical History, Vol. 1. Page 219.*

"As long as church power is vested in any other hands than those with whom our universal Lord, Christ, intrusted it, so long union of christians is impossible; yea we venture to add, so long is every mode of church government indefensible. Follow any plan of church government to its source, trace the reformation to its genuine springs, or pursue a profession of christianity through all its meanders to its fountain, and all will be found to rise in a free voluntary exercise of judgment and will. This is not the union intended by many. I know it fast enough. But if it be the only practicable union; that of which alone the Creator formed us capable; that for the sake of which our sovereign Lord undertook to officiate, as prophet, priest, and king in this world; that for the production of which his revelation, his doctrines, his ordinances, his officers, are all calculated; that, in a word, on which hangs all intellectual felicity, who are we that we presume to sink the happiness of a world in a selfish ocean of rebellion against God." *Life of Claude by Robinson, Vol. 1. Page 28.*

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I shall conclude these Extracts with a passage from Bishop Watson's Charge, and beg leave to add [in brackets] what will make it apply to your case:—"An exclusion from civil office is persecution; [such you may consider your expulsion from the Methodist connexion] it is not the persecution of the inquisition, or Smithfield; it differs from them in degree, but it resembles them in kind. Punishment for religious opinions [for attempting to bring the Methodistical plan to a more scriptural form] is persecution; and evil of any kind, inflicted by the authority of the civil magistrate, [trials, suspension, and expulsion, by district meetings or the conference, without the opinion of the people] is punishment. This evil may respect a man's person or liberty, or property, or character. Civil [a conference expulsion without the benefit of a jury] incapacity brought upon men, [by unscriptural measures] is an evil affecting their property and character: Their character, as it exposes them to the imputation of being [disaffected to the laws and rules of conference—to the church and state] bad citizens: Their property, as it takes from them the possibility of acquiring advantages attending [the preachers' fund, after having subscribed to it a number of years] civil offices. These advantages, whether they consist of wealth, [the advantages of the Methodist connexion] power, [to act as an assistant preacher, and one of the elect hundred] influence, [by enforcing scriptural doctrines and rules] or honour, [the love and affection of the people] are worth something; their value may be variously appreciated; yet being worth something, and their taking away from any man that possibility on account of his religion, [his endeavours to promote a scriptural plan among the people] is persecution."

The following EXTRACT

From the Minutes of the Aberdeen District Meeting, in 1795, unanimously agreed to, by Ten Travelling Preachers, will not be unacceptable to many of the Friends. They were printed and sent to the Chairmen of the different Districts to be considered by the Preachers in general; but in most of the Meetings, many of the Particulars were very much censured and condemned.

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AFTER we had finished the business of our own district, we judged it necessary to give our sentiments upon the following particulars, which refer to the connexion at large.

1. We think, every proposal, however distant, ought to be rejected, that would tend to divide the preachers and our societies. And all hints and declarations which would lead that way, should be censured. Every thing ought to be done, that can possibly be devised, to prevent a breach in our body. Both sides should sacrifice every thing (as far as they can with a good conscience) that would hinder our future union. Then our enemies would not have it in their power to *divide* and *devour* us.

2. We think, all the preachers in full connexion ought to be equal, as far as it is possible. As this was agreed on in the conference after Mr. Wesley's death, and fully confirmed in Bristol last year, it is our earnest desire, that it may be secured to us by law. If it cannot be done by adding a codicil to the present inrolled deed, we are fully persuaded, that a new deed ought to be made immediately, which will admit of it. This appears absolutely necessary, for the *harmony* and *prosperity* of our cause. Several appeals to the hundred since the last conference convince us, that no other plan will establish our peace and confidence in each other. And should no other way be found to discharge the expence of a new deed, let every preacher in full connexion subscribe his part, that there may be no complaining amongst us.

3. As we change our circuits, after having travelled one, two, or three years, to be more useful in our Master's cause, we think a plan of this nature might be adopted, for the frequent change of trustees. It would be possible to specify in the body for the chapel, that every two, three, or more years, all the trustees should be either re-elected or changed; and a sufficient number of sheets of paper or parchment might be added to the *stamp sheet*, without any other expence than paying for those sheets. If the trustees filled up their place for a given time, by the mutual appointment of the preachers and people, this would be attended with infinite advantage to our connexion. In every place where it would be necessary to bring the trustees on this plan, the society would cheerfully contribute to defray the expence of a new deed.

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4. We are also of opinion, that a plan of this nature should be introduced, for the re-electing or changing of our leaders. This would continue useful men in that office, who are willing to lay themselves out for the good of our people ; and bring forward others, who would be abundantly blessed in helping forward the salvation of our friends. If this plan were adopted, our people would meet with great satisfaction in the classes of those persons they had chosen for their leaders, in conjunction with the preachers. We are also of opinion, that leaders should move as much as possible among the classes, as we do in our circuits. While we, and our town and circuit stewards change so regularly, why should we have eternal trustees and class leaders ?

5. We are exactly of the same opinion with this district last year, that where a considerable majority of our people in any place, desire preaching in church hours, and the Lord's supper, they ought by all means to enjoy these privileges, without the least interruption ; always leaving the minority at perfect liberty, to do as they are persuaded in their own minds.

6. We think, that if any number of trustees hinder a preacher in the exercise of his ministry, without sufficient cause, they ought to be considered as enemies to Methodism. And unless a majority of the preachers in the district, with the trustees, leaders, and stewards of the circuit, can prove a preacher to be guilty of immoral conduct, preaching false doctrine, or any thing equally material, they cannot expel him, to be friends to our cause. If trustees of this description, cannot be brought to a better mind by reasoning with them on the subject, it is our opinion, they should be given up at once, and their chapels immediately left, without entering into any process at law with them. Other places of worship should be hired or built, as soon as possible.

7. We heartily agree to have gowns, bands, surplices, and reverends for ever banished from among us ; and also black and blue coats ; with full liberty for every preacher to dress in any colour he pleases, if it be only decent, and becoming the gospel. If this were published in our minutes, and every preacher were allowed to inform those congregations, where gowns and bands have been used, the reason why they are laid aside, our people in general would

would be perfectly satisfied, and many of them would be exceedingly thankful on that account. This article should affect Dr. Coke, and all the clergy in our connexion, as well as those that have had a presbyterian ordination.

8. We are of the same opinion with this district last year, respecting travelling bishops, or any order of men distinguished by any other name, to exercise authority over the preachers in the district. The districts either are, or easily may be made adequate to every thing that may happen between the conferences; and should there be any critical cases, the chairmen of two or three neighbouring districts might be called in to their help. We do not know a district in the three kingdoms, but what is fully sufficient to manage its own affairs, without the help of any person.

9. We are of opinion, that chairmen of districts should be known, to the circuits, as soon as possible after every conference; but we agree with this district last year, that they should be chosen by the preachers in the districts. It would be very easy to do this by letter. And if every preacher, on trial, has a vote in the choice, (we know nothing to the contrary) we think, they should all attend the district meetings, if possible, to know how our matters are adjusted, to help in the affairs of the different circuits, and to give their vote for the delegate who is to attend the conference, to help in drawing up the rough plan of stationing the preachers.

10. We are of the same opinion with this district last year, that every preacher, in full connexion, should have liberty to vote for the president and secretary of the conference, as well as in every critical case, that he knows will be considered, though he may not be present at the conference. If the present deed will not allow this, a new deed should be made that will admit of it. This liberty would give great satisfaction to all parties, and save expence. If this or a similar plan be not adopted, many preachers will attend our conferences, whose absence might be a blessing to the circuits.

11. We think, notwithstanding every thing that has been done since the death of Mr. Wesley, sufficient care has not been taken, in bringing out preachers to travel with us. Many have been brought out by the influence of individuals, who are far from being acceptable to our congregations,

congregations, or useful in them. If some of them had continued a little longer at home, they might have improved to such a degree, as to have been properly recommended. Every person accepted on trial, should first be approved of at the quarterly, and then at the district meetings; but while individuals have it in their power to bring out young men on trial, we cannot think our cause will be so respectable, or useful as it might be. In future, let no man be accepted on trial, however recommended by any preacher, unless he be first received in the quarterly and district meetings.

12. We are of opinion, that there should be an examination, both in quarterly and district meetings, how young men spend their time; what improvement they make; whether they are acceptable and useful or not? If it be evident that any preachers have not an improving mind, or will not give themselves to suitable studies, and that their labours are not acceptable, nor owned of God with success, they ought to be intreated to go home; and should any continue in this state, till they have travelled their four years, we think, they should still be continued on trial, or desist from travelling. This would be of essential service to such preachers, and it would stop the mouths of those who declare, we receive any persons into connexion, and never return one, unless it be for something immoral in his conduct. If the same method could be used with them, that is known to prevail in the cabinets of many courts, it might be well. If they were secretly informed at a district meeting, that they could not be continued, they might have the honour of desisting from travelling, which would not be half so mortifying, as being put out from among the preachers, for want of ability for, or diligence in the ministry.

13. We think, many young preachers have had just cause to complain of their superintendants, in not helping them forward in their great work, as they ought to have done. It is our opinion, that every superintendant should examine how his colleagues spend their time; what books they read; what texts they preach from, and how they divide them; what premeditation and preparation they make use of before preaching, &c. For want of this, many young men spend several years, without making half the improvement they would have made, had they been

been properly attended to. And care should be taken, in future, not to appoint preachers on trial with superintendants, who either want ability or inclination to help them.

14. It is our opinion, that many young preachers have been much tried and hurt, by being sent to Scotland, on their first coming out to travel. As they have so many times to preach in one place, to persons quite different in their dispositions from the English, their labours are neither so acceptable nor useful, as they would be in many circuits in England or Ireland. We think, for the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, and for the advantage of our cause, they should travel a few years before they come into Scotland, unless it be young men of considerable abilities. If this were attended to, many young men would have their minds considerably relieved; and after they have travelled two or three years in England, they would prosecute their studies with great advantage in Scotland, and be both acceptable to our congregations, and blessed in their labours.

15. We are of the same opinion with this district last year, that it would be very useful for many pious promising young men, to be a few months under a proper master, to learn a little of the English Grammar, and to pronounce their words properly. If a small academy were appointed near Leeds, or in any populous part of the kingdom, they might supply a number of places, and regularly attend their studies. This would not hinder their piety, but make them abundantly more useful in the vineyard of Christ. We believe many of our friends would cheerfully subscribe to defray the expence.

16. As the people in Scotland are very much prejudiced against class-meetings, we have many pious persons belonging to our congregations, who cannot make up their minds to meet in them: they attend no place of worship but ours, and regularly communicate with us. It appears expedient to us to meet the views of those persons, by introducing fellowship meetings among us, such as are kept by some pious persons in this kingdom, or among the Dissenters in some parts of England; and if they were so conducted as to keep up the true spirit of vital religion, they might be exceedingly useful; and in time prepare the minds of many, to accept of the farther helps of class and

band meetings. We have no inclination, by this, to lay aside class meetings, (although if these were sometimes varied in the manner of meeting, they might be more useful) but only to accommodate and help those persons who are friendly to our cause, and daily walk in the fear of God.

17. We are of the same opinion with this district last year, that a more simple and advantageous plan might be adopted, both in England and Scotland, for administering the Lord's supper. When the sermon is finished, if, after a suitable exhortation, all the communicants could be served together, this would not take up more than half the time: It would lead our people to communicate once a month or six weeks, with pleasure and satisfaction, as well as for the glory of our blessed Lord and Master.

18. We are of opinion, that every preacher should be treated with all possible affection by his brethren, and no respect of persons be shown, on any occasion. If a superintendent have the care of a circuit, this should not authorise him to stay a second or a third year, to the disadvantage of his colleagues. If there be preachers in the circuit, as acceptable and useful as he is, they ought to have an equal right with him, to stay more than one year; and should they be more useful and acceptable, and the situation of their families require it, they ought to be continued in preference to him. It is very trying to many of our preachers, and to the congregations, for them to be removed, after staying only one year, when they might continue longer, to the advantage of our cause, and to the happiness of themselves and of their families.

19. It is our opinion, that no preacher should be removed from, or kept out of a circuit, on account of the influence of a few individuals. Some of our preachers have been unfavourably represented, both in their districts and in the conference. Impressions have been made, which tended greatly to their disadvantage. If it be asserted that such a person cannot stay a second year where he is, or go into any other particular circuit, he should be informed of the cause, and allowed to know who are his accusers. If this were granted, it would often be found, that, when it is said, the *people* object, it is only a *few* individuals, and they had no sufficient cause for objecting. To oppose the influence of such persons, would be for the glory of God, the good of our connexion, and for the happiness of the preachers and people immediately concerned.

20. It is our opinion, that the preachers' fund is not on such a foundation as can be rationally justified.—We think, in most cases, the real wants of preachers, &c. should be the rule of disbursement, and not the number of years they have travelled. We have no objection against an old veteran, worn out in his Master's cause, having 30l. a year, or respectable widows the same sum; but we think those who are superannuated, before they have travelled such a number of years as entitles them to a comfortable maintenance, should have all their wants fully supplied. We also think that young widows, who are the relicts of old men, should not be allowed more than 12l. a year, besides what is necessary for their children, if they have any. And we think 12l. (and not to exceed 20l.) should only be given to those men or widows, who have fortunes of their own, and yet *will have* something from the fund.

21. If it be true, that every boy at Kingswood school costs the connexion upwards of 30l. a year, we are *assured* this arises from mismanagement. We think a little more than half the sum amply sufficient. If the school cannot be supported for less than 20l. a year for every boy, we think it should be given up immediately. The collection might be continued, and the boys suitably educated at home, for about half the money. If the preachers' fund and the school be put upon an honourable foundation, none will have just cause to reproach us, as they do now; and our friends will continue to contribute towards their support.

22. We think the rules of our society and bands should be carefully examined; and several of them either altered or expunged. As they now stand, they give offence to many, and some of the expressions cannot be justified.—They might be sufficiently binding in things not essential, though expressed in such a manner, as to give no just cause of offence to any.

23. We are of the same opinion with this district last year, respecting the sale of our books. Every preacher ought to be encouraged to sell them. But while the superintendant monopolizes all the profits, and employs his colleagues to carry them out, this is both unjust, and against the interests of the book-room. If a suitable proportion of the profits was assigned to every preacher, this would induce us all to recommend them, and by this means we should spread the knowledge of true religion, and raise our funds considerably.

Aberdeen, April 16, 1795.

The following Paper, written by Mr. Richard Wilson, of Mosley Society, near Manchester, was read in a Meeting held in Salford, the 17th of November, 1796, and universally approved of by the Friends met together on the occasion. By their particular desire it is inserted in the Monitor.

“THE great end and design of the gospel institution, is the honour of its founder, and the happiness of mankind; and these are inseparable. Let us view our Redeemer as the great Shepherd of Israel—see what ample provision he has made for his flock, in giving himself a ransom for them; and also in withholding from them no manner of good. Faithful ministers are one of his choicest blessings. They are pleasing in his sight, and enjoy a proper title to their situation, so long as they tread in his steps, and feed his flock with the sincere milk of the word; not counting their lives dear to themselves, so that they may but finish their course with joy, and the ministry he has intrusted them with. But on the contrary, if they neglect their Master’s interest, in the preservation, increase, and prosperity of his flock, and mind principally their own preservation, and increase of power—their own property in riches and honour, they certainly forfeit every just title to the confidence of the great Shepherd of Israel. For thus he saith, “I am against such shepherds, and will require my flock at their hands, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock.”

“Ministers are also the watchmen of the people. They set them upon their walls for their own safety and protection; and they only enjoy a just title to the people’s confidence and support, so long as they faithfully serve them in that situation. But should they, instead of promoting the safety and happiness of the citizens of Zion, be striving with each other for pre eminence, and minding principally their own ease and emolument; should they, instead of being peace makers, sow strife and discord in the city; and when one of their brethren, (a watchman) had integrity enough to discover their unfaithfulness and corruption, they, instead of redressing the grievances, after they have given him what they call a trial, throw him over the walls to the enemy. Should the citizens complain of the unjust-
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ness of their proceedings, the watchmen should tell them, if you do not like our conduct and our laws, the gates are open; you may depart; we will only be accountable to our brother watchmen, (or peers) what justice could be expected in such a case? Would not those citizens deserve the names of fools and madmen, if they continued to support watchmen who would be their betrayers and destroyers?

“ To continue the simile a little farther:—When the spiritual walls of our Jerusalem were beginning to be built, the times were exceedingly troublesome, and the place of a watchman was of all others the most arduous and perilous. Without were slanders, reproach, and persecution; and within were poverty and fear, so that there was need of the citizens taking care that improper persons did not stand upon their walls: For had any the temerity to climb up there, not being a true patriot, or lover of the citizens, the contempt, reproach, and distress he was exposed to, soon made him quit that place. But now the case is quite different. Without, is respect and peace. Within, is honour and plenty. So that now there is the greatest need for the citizens to take care what sort of persons are their watchmen: For it is certainly a great temptation for the proud mechanic, or idle labourer, to get into that place.—The application is easy, and from what has been advanced, it is evident, whether we view ministers as sent forth by the great head of the church, or as sent out by the people, that if they serve one they will serve the other: For the interest of Christ and his church cannot be separated. The great and true end then of all church government is the promoting this one interest. Therefore it appears of little account with the Almighty what form it wears, so that the great design be answered. This was done in a great degree by the first Christians, when the ministers were the least of all in their own esteem: And willing not only to forego their lawful privileges, but even to deny themselves of the comforts and necessities of life, to further this great design.—This interest has also been supported by individuals; as in the case of our late venerable pastor, Mr. Wesley, and the people in general were very content and happy under his government, being persuaded that the glory of God and the prosperity of the church were the great ends he had in view in all his conduct through life. This he evidenced,

ced, not only by his indefatigable labours, but likewise by his unremitting liberality and charity. So that the people were well assured, that the money which they put into his hands would not be laid out in the funds and banks on earth, but put into the hands of the governor and company of the bank of heaven. It appears, then, that the great end and design of the gospel institution may be accomplished, either when the power is exercised by the church collectively, or by an individual in the planting, or infant state of the church. But that this end and design were ever accomplished by an aristocracy of priests or ministers, claiming and exercising an independent power, is much to be doubted. Let the advocates for such a church government by priests, tell us where and when they lived, what was the name they were called by, and how long they kept the church they presided over in purity and peace. If they can not, but on the contrary, the history and experience of near two thousand years hold out to us melancholy examples of such a government tending always to the corruption of religion, the dishonour of its founder, and the misery of mankind, is it not high time that the people should profit by such examples, and shun that cause which has invariably brought forth such pernicious effects? That men brought up in seminaries of learning, and designed for the ministry from their infancy, should have such views of an independent power is not much to be wondered at: But that the Methodist preachers should assert it to be their privilege so stiffly, is certainly a very extraordinary thing. Ministers, most of whom are just come from their manual labours, and whose chief recommendation is their humility, piety, and zeal, (and better recommendations they surely cannot have, for the people perceiving the grace of God in them, give them the right hand of fellowship, and when this is the case, send them forth as the messengers of the churches, not to have dominion over their faith, but to be helpers of their joy) yet they are quite unqualified, in some respects, for exercising, with propriety, that independent power, which every assistant claims, and to put them, after five or six years travelling, into such a situation, is not only unjust with respect to the people, but must be a great snare to their humility, piety, and zeal. To be a president or ruling elder of a society of two or three thousand people, is as high a degree of honour as can well consist with the well-being
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and safety of a minister of Christ; and will require all his watchfulness and care to keep up a lively sense of his dependence on God, and his own insufficiency for the important work. This cannot be without a continual supply of divine wisdom and grace.

“Moreover, the unjustness of the claim will farther appear, if we consider, that in such a society, it is likely, there are men of matured understandings, and approved piety and integrity, who have been pillars in the house of God, for thirty or forty years: Yea, and probably ministers of his word, who have been publishing the gospel of Christ in the towns and villages round about for a number of years, without fee or reward from man. Likewise there are a number of inferior officers in every such society, exhorters, class-leaders, those who pray in public, &c. who are all in some degree ministers of Christ. For every one who is helpful to another in his spiritual concerns, is so far a minister of Christ to him. So that travelling preachers bear but a small proportion to the number of the persons just named. Hence it appears highly unreasonable and unjust, to exclude these from a due share of power in the management of that institution, they so much contribute to carry on and support. I believe there is not one person in a hundred, who desires a reform, that would wish any thing to be with-held from the preachers which would be for their real good. And certainly, if they would leave *sewing tables* entirely to the people, and trust in Christ and his followers, for a supply of their own wants, they would have more time to devote to the word of God and prayer, and consequently the advantage would be greater, both to themselves and the church. In short, it highly behoves the people to assert their just rights. Reason and scripture require it. Christ and his church require it. To have a pure ministry requires it. The happiness of the present and succeeding generations require it. And if it is not done speedily, Methodism will be the scorn and reproach of the heathen, and the derision of all that are round about.

R. W.

An Extract from a Circular Letter of the Eastern Association, held at Harlow, Essex, June 16th, 17th, and 18th, 1778, to the Protestant Dissenting Churches, usually denominated BAPTISTS.

Dear and honoured Brethren,

THROUGH the goodness of God, we, the ministers and messengers of the associated churches, met in health, and peace, and quietly enjoyed what was graciously promised long ago, Zech. iii. 10.—In attending to the several letters we find abundant cause for thankfulness, when we consider the peaceable and prosperous state of the churches in our connexion. Our numbers increase—our churches are comfortably provided with pastors—and peace subsists in the general body, and in each particular church.—But as Zion in her militant state, has ever a mixture of groans and complaints, with her songs of joy, so we find it with ourselves.—We have cause to lament the small influence of the gospel of Christ on ourselves and others.—We view with sorrow the distracted state of our country.—We grieve for the almost general inattention of our countrymen unto the hand of God in our national troubles.—We mourn for the want of a spirit of prayer, by which we would take hold of a departing God, and prevail with him still to stretch the wings of his providential protection over our country, and to shed the beams of his gracious influence on his churches.—It is matter of sorrow to us to see among the professors of truth, so many loose livers, formal worshippers, neglecters of ordinances, fierce disputers, orthodox worldlings, and lukewarm christians.—These things being considered, the threatening appearances they never apprehended, the consequences dreaded, we judged it expedient to appoint a day for humiliation, fasting, and prayer, to be observed in all the congregations in our association, and request your serious attention to that solemn business.

In our last year's Address, Brethren, we earnestly recommended to you the ancient and useful custom of ASSOCIATING, and set before you for example the practice of our fathers in the faith.—This primitive institution, we believe, may under a divine blessing be attended with singular advantages, when conducted in love, and regulated by christian prudence.

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By such a yearly correspondence, we lay each church under a kind of necessity to keep up the regular discipline of God's house. They are allured to look into their own state, in order to send a just account to the associated body; and are naturally led to an examination of their present circumstances. This may prove a means to prevent those awful consequences, which usually follow an inattention to our present state, both in individuals, and collected societies. Laodicea is said *not to know*, perhaps for want of examination. Grey hairs are often unseen, for want of attention to our own condition. Had some men been in connexion with a society of merchants, to whom they judged it proper to send a yearly account of profits and loss, they had perhaps prevented that, which has been ruinous to themselves, and greatly detrimental to others. Churches in connexion with an associated body, should doubtless make their remarks on their own state at the return of the season; and the following things should be the objects of their attention.—The increase or diminution of their auditory—The regular or irregular attendance of the members on the ordinances in the church, whether public or private—The temper and frame (so far as may be discerned) of all under the preaching of God's word—And the apparent influence of the word, when it is preached, whether it be made the means of awakening the careless, restraining the vicious, or persuading souls to follow Christ; if the dejected be comforted, if points be urged to a diligent pursuit after great measures of grace and holiness, and be built up in their most holy faith. Thus, by a narrow inspection into the general state of the church, and a regard to the case of each member, the pastor of each church might be led to form a more exact judgment of the good or bad state of his flock, and rejoice or mourn, according to its flourishing or declining condition. His representation of this to the general body will give all an opportunity of assisting him by caution, by direction, by comfort, or advice, as best suited to his circumstances.

If this be strictly and conscientially attended to by the officers of our several churches, the right END of associating may be expected. While we all unanimously seek to promote the glory of God, and the spiritual profit and prosperity of his people, we pursue the grand end, for which the Lord made us men, and made us christians.—

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In all religious institutions, brethren, there is a **GRAND END** proposed by God, and this end should ever be pursued by us. The grand end of *all* to be attended to in all ordinances is the glorifying God, and our own salvation; and, though these seem to be two, yet they really are but one end, God having joined them so closely together, that it is impossible for any to put them asunder. When either of us look upon himself as a member of a smaller or larger body of religious men, we are ever to consider the end designed by God in making us such, and be duly careful to hold this end ever in view. Am I a shepherd over part of his flock? What is the end of my office? Am I a member of a christian church? What was the design of God, in putting me among his people? Is it not to fit me for his service on earth, and the enjoyment of himself in heaven, that he may be glorified in my salvation? If I be a true member of his true church, that is the end designed by God, and should always be pursued by me. A careless unconverted professor, in every part of his religious character, either pursues no end, or a bad one, and thus, never considering the end of his church membership, nor pursuing it, misses the grand end designed by God towards his own people, both in this world, and in the next; for he is neither made holy here, nor happy hereafter. May each of you, brethren, under divine influence, be enabled to keep the right end in view in all your solemn dealings with God and with his church! You may be sure that the end of every gospel institution is answered to each of you, when each is made a wise, comfortable, and fruitful christian: wise by a spiritual discovery of the glory and goodness of divine truth, comfortable in a rich and sound experience of its living power on your own soul; and fruitful by a practical improvement of its blessings in your life and conversation.

That there is great glory and much goodness to be seen in the gospel of Christ, is not to be doubted; for it is the wisdom of God in a mystery—a spiritual discovery of the glory and goodness of gospel truth is indispensably necessary to make a man a *real* christian. It is not understanding the system or scheme of evangelical doctrines, as laid down in creeds and confessions, that works any sanctifying effects upon the soul, or brings a man one step nearer heaven: but it is a spiritual discovery of the glory and goodness

goodness of gospel doctrines, which makes a man wise unto salvation. Many there are, brethren, who, for want of attending to this distinction, awfully deceive themselves, and, at the same time they are orthodox professors, and look upon themselves as sound believers, yet they remain blind to the glory, and ignorant of the goodness, of those truths, which they profess to believe, and thus become doctors in divinity, while they remain mere dunces in real christianity.

This happens, not because they don't in some senses know the truth, but because they never had any spiritual discovery of its glory and goodness. It is a truth owned and acknowledged by all the professors of christianity, *That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*: but when the glory and goodness of this truth is seen by an enlightened understanding, it produces wonderful effects in the soul. See *Phil. iii. 8.*

There is a sweet harmony and perfect agreement seen between the doctrines of truth, when viewed by a spiritual mind; one serves to set off the lustre of the other; and hence the doctrine of human depravity serves to magnify the riches of divine grace, and when viewed in conjunction with other truths, by those who feel the awful truth in their own breasts, it begets true humility, and produces an humble walk towards God and man—shows the absolute need of Christ's sacrifice—and begets profound admiration at God's love. This spiritual discovery of the glory and goodness of divine truth, brethren, (though overlooked by many) is the only thing that can make us truly wise.—Many persons see the image of truth in a consistent set of sentiments, and content themselves with viewing the well-drawn picture, while the beauty of substantial truth is hid from their eyes. Take heed, brethren, of this deception. You would pity the deluded wretch, who prostrates himself before a painted puppet, and vainly imagines he has paid his acceptable praise to the mother of God; not less to be pitied is that man, who sees the consistency of doctrinal sentiments, and is blind to the glory of truth itself.

We pray for you all, brethren, that what was said of old, *2 Cor. iv. 6.* may be fulfilled in each of you to the joy of your souls; for where the Holy Ghost enlightens the understanding, and enables us to discover spiritual things

things in their *true* nature, God's glory, and a sinner's best interest, are seen inseparably united, and eternally secured.

God appears infinitely glorious, and the sinner unspeakably happy, and divine truth discovered to the understanding makes plain this unscrutable mystery. Thus it is we are made truly wise, and when the powerful influence of truth is felt on the soul, we are made truly happy, and unspeakably comfortable. There is nothing, brethren, in the whole compass of knowledge, like gospel truth revealed to the soul, to make men really happy. It is said to be life eternal, John xvii. 3. Truth acknowledged and confessed only will afford no real pleasure, but truth discovered in its real glory, and felt in its comforting influence, with a solid persuasion of our own personal interest therein, will carry us through life and death composed and happy, joyful and triumphant. The notion of Christ dying for sinners may claim a cold assent, and beget a delusive hope in the heart of a dying formalist : but the felt persuasion of Christ dying for ME, removing the curse from ME, and fully delivering ME from the wrath to come, and thus opening a free passage for ME to the throne of God ; this, I say, delivers me from my guilty fears—inspires my soul with devout gratitude—begets in me exalted hopes of glory—makes me smile in death, and rejoice in prospect of an opening eternity. Truth, brethren, is so far our own, as its influence is felt on our souls ; and when the truth is thus brought home in its power on the soul, it never fails to produce its genuine effects in the conversation and life ; for while it attracts me with its beauty, and comforts me with its sweetness, it regulates my words and actions by both.

Every good work must proceed from a good principle, and there can be no good principle in a sinner's heart until it is formed there by the power of truth.—The principles of religion, which we commonly call the doctrines of the gospel, are the only powerful incentives to real holiness ; but they never produce it in any except those, who discover their glory, and feel their power. Their being held as sentiments by many, without being felt as powerful motives and strong inducements to real godliness, have greatly exposed them to the contempt of the ignorant, and the fierce rage of opposers ; but every one of you, brethren,

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who know the peace and comfort arising from a powerful persuasion of God's love, and a stedfast belief of his having forgiven you all sin, freely and fully, through the merit of his blessed Son; you, we say, know that these mercies of God powerfully persuade you to give up your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to the Lord. Had God proposed a method of saving sinners, which did not make as suitable provision for their holiness, as it did for their happiness, it had been greatly to the detriment of his sacred character. But this can never be said with truth, respecting the plan of wisdom revealed in the oracles of God, and professed by us.

It will certainly be found, where the glory of gospel truths is discovered, and their influence felt on the soul, that they will produce a conversation, which will adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. Can I see the wisdom, the justice, the mercy, and the love of God, in punishing his beloved Son for my guilty soul, and enjoy the divine consolation, which this truth affords, and not be led to love and obey God in return for his goodness? It cannot be. You are therefore, brethren, ever to distinguish between evangelical doctrines professed, and truth experienced in its power. Truth professed in doctrines constitutes a professor; but truth experienced in its power makes a christian.

We most earnestly recommend it to you all, to labour for a spiritual discovery of the glory and goodness of your own principles—a felt sense of their power on your own souls—and a practical improvement of them in the whole of your conversation. As many of you as have been savingly enlightened are sons of God. See the honour of your relation, and live under a felt sense of this, and it is impossible you can indulge sin.

Each of you stands in a threefold capacity, and has three distinct characters to attend to:—You may be considered as men in the world—as members of the church—and as relations in the family. In your *christian* character these three are to meet. An honest man in the world—an honourable member of Christ's church—and a good relation in the family. The spiritual knowledge and comfortable enjoyment of your own principles, is absolutely necessary to form you such christians, as are useful in the world, and an honour to the church, and blessings in the families,

families in which God has placed you. The great end of all God's institutions is then answered when you are thus made wise, comfortable, and fruitful christians. The end for which we ministers labour, in the study, in our prayers, public and private, in our exhortations in your houses, and in our public ministrations, is then answered, when you are brought to see the glory of the gospel, to feel its *transforming* influence, and when it is practicably drawn out in your lives to the glory of God, the profit of men, and the advantage of yourselves. For this, brethren, we associate—for this we preach—for this we hope—for this we pray. When our labours are thus crowned with success, we shall see religion respected where it is not embraced, and your lives will condemn those, whom our preaching cannot reform: But if any of you be still blind, sordid, worldly, and impure, our labour is lost, our time and strength are spent for nought, we are disappointed, and you are eternally undone. Brethren, remember you are made a spectacle unto God, angels, and men.—Take care you don't prejudice the minds of the hardened world against the truth, while you profess to believe the best of principles, and live no better than they, who hold the worst.—The truths you profess are worthy the All-wise God to reveal, and of every wise man to embrace and believe. Let your conduct, therefore, powerfully convince every beholder, that your religion consists not in assenting to a set of dry speculative notions; but, that you are influenced in heart and life by the soul-transforming truth of God. If I profess, that God loved me before the world began—that his Son redeemed me from hell by his blood—that I am brought out of a state of death and misery—that I am made a fellow-citizen of the saints—that I am led by the Spirit of God, and am training up through a variety of dispensations for an eternity of enjoyment with God—can any thing be more reasonable, than that whether I eat or drink, or whatsoever I do, I should do all to the glory of God?

We are jealous, brethren, lest any of you should make the fatal mistake of thinking, that believing the truth of the doctrines of grace is believing in Christ. There is a material difference between a man's believing the doctrine of remission, and his believing on Christ for the forgiveness of his own sins. The former of these may remain
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a cold uninfluencing sentiment: the latter will prove a heart-purifying grace.

Give us leave, then, to remind you, brethren, that it is only the province of the Divine Spirit, to discover the beauty of divine truth to the minds of men, and powerfully to persuade the soul to embrace it from its discovered goodness. Our parents may teach us a train of just sentiments, and help us to support the same by plain scripture proofs: but unless the Spirit of God give the understanding a power of perception, and hold forth gospel truth in its native beauty before the soul, we shall remain ignorant of the true nature of every spiritual object, 1 Cor. ii. 14.—2 Cor. iv. 6. Until the goodness of them is apprehended by the mind, they will have no influence on the heart, nor can they produce any good effects in the life.

This being the case, our Lord, in his infinite compassion to his church, left us that comfortable promise, *John* xvi. 13. from whence it appears, that the office of the Holy Ghost is a **LEADING INTO ALL TRUTH**, and a principal part of truth is its goodness, and the suitableness of it to the nature and known attributes of God.

May it then be your care, brethren, very constantly, in all your addresses at the throne of grace, to seek the guidance of the Blessed Spirit, both for your pastors and yourselves. Be often at the feet of Jesus for divine instruction—watch over your own hearts—and endeavour to preserve a truly spiritual frame of soul—keep up the useful practice of reading the Word of God, and prayer in your families, and beware of a formal spirit in the discharge of those duties—teach your children and servants, that they are sinners and need a Saviour. Ask yourselves very frequently—Do I live under the exercise of grace? Is a throne of grace precious to me, in private? Let the gates of Zion be ever delightful to you, and appear there in person.—Rejoice at opportunities of seeking the face of Jacob's God. Stand in a readiness for your Master's appearance, with your loins girt about, in a waiting posture of soul. Take care that ye hide not the accursed thing, either in your house or heart, lest ye bring the fire of God on yourselves, and trouble the camp of the Lord. Strive to live a comfortable, useful life; and remember, that is a life of communion with God. Live in love and peace, and the God of love and peace be with you. *Amen.*

To be concluded in our next.

To the Editor of the METHODIST MONITOR.

SIR,

PERMIT me through the channel of your useful publication, to address our brethren upon a subject, which perhaps, may not have been maturely considered by many, who wish well to our connexion at large, but are at a loss to find out the reasons which stimulate us to bring about a reform in the government of it.

It is the opinion of many respectable friends, that the present struggle betwixt the preachers and the people, is for POWER. That it is perfectly right, and absolutely necessary for the well-ordering of our societies, to have somewhere to look up to for the settling of any difference which may arise, and for counsel and advice when any matter is brought forward, which requires deliberation, cannot certainly be disputed; but where this power should be lodged, and who the persons are with whom to deliberate, is a subject worthy of our serious consideration. While our honoured Father Mr. Wesley, was at the head of our connexion, he was as a centre of union betwixt the preachers and the people; the love and respect which each party bore to his person and labours, made them willing to submit to his government; but after his death, the power exercised by him could not, consistently with the peace of our societies, be lodged in any one, or number of his sons in the gospel; it being impossible for them to obtain that influence over the preachers and people, which would be necessary for them to have, in order to render their decisions in all matters of dispute final; and to give to all the laws which they might chuse to enact, strength and effect.

And as it does not appear feasible for the power to be lodged in the hands of a few individuals, so neither can the superintendants of circuits, with any degree of justice, arrogate to themselves the exclusive right of settling all matters relating to the respective societies where they labour. The power they frequently exercise is certainly an infringement of the people's rights, and often a source of uneasiness and discontent. Neither is a district meeting, nor yet the conference, adequate to the well-governing of
our

our connexion ; for in these meetings, as they are at present conducted, the voice of the people is not heard ; consequently, whatever measures are adopted for the government of the connexion, must be inefficient for want of the concurrence of the party upon whom they are intended to operate.

But if the power cannot be lodged in the hands of the preachers, with whom can it be lodged to answer all the purposes of good order and equitable government? The answer I would return is the following: 1st, Let the people have a part in the government, and in conjunction with the preachers in each circuit, settle all matters that occur, and all differences and disputes which may arise. 2d, Those matters which concern an individual society, might be determined in a leaders' meeting, consisting of preachers, trustees, stewards, and leaders of that society. 3d, The matters which concern a circuit may be settled in quarterly meetings for that circuit, consisting of the travelling and local preachers, and stewards appointed from the several societies in the circuit. 4th, If any thing arises which cannot be determined in these meetings, let the cause be carried to a district meeting, composed of all the preachers of that district, and an equal number of delegates chosen to attend by a majority of the last quarterly meeting in each circuit. 5th, Let every thing be conducted here with freedom and openness, in the presence of all parties concerned ; and let all have free access who have any thing to bring forward, and from this meeting *let there be no appeal*. This appears to be a scriptural, rational, and easy plan, calculated to give general satisfaction; and, if adopted, it is easy to perceive that it would reduce the business of the annual conference, into one-tenth of its present magnitude. One or two preachers, with a delegate or delegates chosen at each district meeting, would be sufficient to assemble in the annual conference, to settle those matters which must be unavoidably brought to that meeting : such as stationing the preachers, and applying the yearly and Kingswood collections, &c. Let the delegates have the charge of the collections, and see them properly applied ; printing their annual report, for the inspection of the different societies, each signing his own name, to the general account published after the conference.

I am

I am aware that the leading preachers, who have seized and wish to retain the power in their own hands, will not be willing to let the people be co-partners with them therein; the ideas they have formed of the wisdom and understanding of those from whom they receive their support, borders too much upon contempt, for them to think they can add any thing to them by way of information and advice; but let them remember, that the wisest of mankind have frequently been instructed by those, who in comparison with themselves, may be accounted ignorant; and have thought it no diminution to adopt measures suggested by their inferiors. And why should the preachers hesitate to receive the people into their counsels? Is it not their interest to give them all the satisfaction in their power? Does not the success of their ministry in a great measure depend upon their conciliating the affections of their hearers? Would they again revive the reign of popery, and enjoin their followers to pay them passive obedience? Would not this effectually drive from amongst them every sensible and intelligent member? And is it to their credit to retain only those who implicitly pin their faith upon themselves? My dear brethren, you cannot but be sensible, that the preachers, by acting independently of the people, form themselves into a dangerous aristocracy, which has already produced, and will infallibly continue to produce, jealousy and dissatisfaction; and without possessing the spirit of prophecy, one may venture to affirm, will finally terminate in distrusts and divisions.

Before I conclude, permit me, Sir, to address myself to the preachers. Many of their minds appear to be agitated, and they suppose, that the regulations which are wished to be made, will militate against their dearest interests and privileges.

My Dear Fathers and Brethren,—Many of you are well acquainted with men and things, and you are not insensible that the eyes of the whole connexion are fixed upon you, expecting to find that wisdom and piety manifested in you, which they have been led to suppose you possess in an eminent degree: disappoint not their expectations. Put yourselves in their situation, and ask, should we, as a body of professing christians, like to have laws imposed upon us, which neither scripture nor reason authorize? Ought not all prudential rules to have our concurrence,

currence, before they are inforced, and is it right to drive us from the community we love, because we cannot submit to be governed without our own consent? That is, by delegates chosen from amongst us, to have a voice in all our private as well as public meetings, upon all matters relating to the connexion. Is there any thing unreasonable in this? Ought it not to be tendered to us without our solicitation, if you would wish us to be a happy and a free people? To love our preachers and to be beloved by them? Do not imagine, that we, who bear the image of God, as well as yourselves, are incapable of drawing conclusions from given premises, and know not when our rights are invaded? Amuse us not with your pretended love to us, while at the same time, you consider us, as beasts, to be subdued, and saddled, and ridden, and slaughtered at pleasure! Treat us like men and christians, and thereby manifest your own rationality, and your internal acquaintance with the High Priest of our profession.— And be assured, that nothing in our power shall be wanting, to make your lives comfortable, and your labours prosperous.

Methinks I hear many of you say, “ ’Tis just, ’tis right: We ought to give our people all the reasonable satisfaction they desire. We would not wish to forget the rock from whence we ourselves were hewn; nor the simple intention which influenced us, when we were put into the ministry. We would not be lords over God’s heritage, but rather examples to the flock. Our business as ministers of the gospel, is certainly, with the great apostle of the Gentiles, to become all things to all men; especially to those, to whom we are indebted for the comforts we enjoy: and when those things in which they wish to be satisfied, relate chiefly to the discipline of our church, and to our temporal concerns, we ought chearfully to invite them to take the oversight of them.”

Men accustomed to business—men whose situations are local—men whose love to the cause in which we are engaged, has been manifested in a variety of respects, may certainly be of essential service to us; and it is highly reasonable, nay, it is absolutely necessary, that they should have a voice equal with our own, in whatever concerns the well government of our connexion.”

I believe,

I believe, my dear brethren, you are not in general averse to regulations similar to the foregoing; the majority of you are sensible, that if the views of the leading preachers receive no check, you will be in a much worse situation in respect to them, than any of the people amongst whom you labour; and if through cowardice at present, you smother your real sentiments; will you not have cause to repent, that you have not manfully, yet lovingly contended for your own rights and privileges, as well as the rights and privileges of the people? Leaving these matters to your serious consideration, I shall conclude, praying that the Father of lights may fill you with heavenly understanding, and give you a right judgment in all things.

AMICUS.

N. B. One part of this Letter is of infinite importance to the welfare of our connexion; and that is, the proper management of district meetings.

1. If an equal number of preachers and delegates attended, they would appear as brethren, and freely converse upon every subject introduced for discussion.
2. Every person assembled, unbiassed by the presence of the *ruling few*, would state his views and sentiments without reserve, and give his opinion without hesitation.
3. The characters of the preachers—the state of the circuits—the removal of preachers and families—with a number of particulars, might be fully examined and settled.
4. The plan of stationing might be brought considerably forward in them; and they would fully determine, who should be appointed to come out on trial, and who should be admitted into full connexion; as also, who should desist from travelling for want of abilities—immorality of conduct, or infirmities, that render them superannuated.
5. They might disburse the collections according to the wants of the circuits, &c. If any thing remained on hand, it might be taken to the conference; and if any thing was deficient, they might receive it from thence.
6. A very few preachers, with an equal number of delegates, would transact the business of the conference, in a few days.

This plan is rational and scriptural—it would satisfy the people every where—it would break the power and undue influence of the *ruling few*—it would free the rest of the preachers from *abject submission to them*—it would save a great deal of time and expence—it would have a powerful influence to *purge and preserve the connexion from corruption*.

A. K.

Leeds, 7th March, 1797.

No. IX.

THE Methodist Monitor.

"The business of Ministers of the Gospel is exactly the same as the Apostles. They are not allowed to retrench, or add to, the Conditions of Everlasting Life, as laid down in the infallible Word of Truth, but to declare them plainly, faithfully, and constantly, as they are penned by the Holy Spirit: The Word of God is their Confession of Faith, from it they gather their Thirty-nine Articles. I would not have it understood that I despise the Writings of the pious Reformers, but only that the true Ministers of Christ do not make these the Criterion or Standard of their Faith: They advert to the Law and the Testimony; this is the Rule by which they walk, and by which they preach. This Word is the great Repository, the grand Storehouse, from which every faithful Minister of Christ, must draw all his Ammunition and Artillery, and every Implement necessary for his spiritual Campaign. This Word we must mark with extraordinary Attention, learn with peculiar Diligence, and so digest its whole Contents, as that the Truths thereof may be interwoven in our very Frame. We shall then be enabled to see clearly what is the Will and Mind of God concerning us, and what are the particular Doctrines, as well as the gracious Import of the gracious Dispensation of the Gospel of Christ: The Word will then become a Lamp unto our Feet, and a Light unto our Path; and the Man of God be thoroughly furnished unto every good Work."

Should we follow this excellent Advice, do not persecute us any longer, Father Pawson, for obeying your Precepts.

Mr. HANBY's Funeral Sermon, preached at Nottingham 22d January, 1797, by Mr. JOHN PAWSON.

EXTRACTS

From Mr. ROBINSON'S ARCANÆ: or, the Principles of the late Petitioners to Parliament, for Relief in the Matter of Subscription. In Eight Letters to a Friend.

IN the preface he says, “ The present state of religion in Great Britain, pretty much resembles its state-policy, when the Romans invaded and enslaved it. This island was then divided into several petty states, and all the strength of those states was employed in securing each other against its neighbour: so that when the Romans, the common enemy came, they were too feeble to resist long, and bowed to the Imperial yoke. Christianity is indeed the religion of the British empire, but christianity divided into parties; and each party employs its learning, eloquence, fortune, and influence, to prevent the encroachments of another party, to enervate its neighbour, and invigorate itself. While this is doing, ignorance and immorality, stupidity and luxury overflow all bounds, and, to the grief of every man, overwhelm all orders and degrees of men. Mankind have a few first principles in them, the dictates of nature, and the basis of all exterior: in these, as in their features, they agree much more than some are aware of; and hence a common consent about a thousand things never regulated by law. Christianity is an address to these principles, and not a dispute about words and modes subversive of religion and morality.

“ Let any impartial inquirer take up the holy scriptures, and ask, Whither do all the contents of these ancient writings tend? History, prophecy, miracles, the ceremonies of the Old, and the reasonings of the New Testament; the legislation of Moses, and the mission of Jesus Christ; to what do they all tend? What is their aim? The proper answer would be, their *professed* end is to give *glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and benevolence among men.* Grand design! Founded on the surest principles, the perfections of God: Painted in all the finely-coloured imagery of the prophets: Sometimes reigning in all the solidity of reason; sometimes rolling in all the majesty of song: here, glimmering in a type; there, blazing in a promise; yonder,

yonder, set to music by angelic spirits themselves. Now, to be a christian, is neither more nor less than to concur with this design: So much of this, so much true religion, the rest is *nothing but a noise*. False religions are selfish, this is social; and its sociableness is at once its proof and its praise. See 1 Cor. xiii.

“Several excellent pieces have been published on this subject. By a strange oversight in readers, the real principles of this controversy are mistaken. A statesman suspects civil faction; a trinitarian complains of arianism; a calvinist urges the looseness of arminianism; an arminian the intolerance of calvinism. Surprising! Was the dispute about DOCTRINE, the divinity of Christ, and predestination might be canvassed, but the dispute is about Church-DISCIPLINE. For shame, gentlemen, don't mistake the question; the question is not WHAT, but WHY the church believes; whether by compulsion or choice.—People thought you had studied a body of divinity, and were well versed in logic, and do you confound rules of practice with rules of belief. Church-government with church-doctrine. Differ as much or as long as you will about doctrine, you are obliged to be of the same principles in discipline and government, unitarian or trinitarian have nothing to do here.

“There is not one natural operation of the mind but has its object in this religion: nor one object but what affords with this religion. This is not the place to pursue such a subject. Let it suffice to add, jurisprudence is perfect in proportion as it fits the nature of man, and universal toleration in matters of conscience, has a tendency towards that perfection. *The cause is before the judge.*—With the ministers of the established church the question is, Has a christian church a right to require any religious test of *her own* ministers? But with the dissenting clergy the question is, Has one christian church a right to force her creed on the ministers of *another* christian church? Ought the Greek church to impose her creed on the church of Rome? Ought the church of England to force her's on the church of Scotland? And vice versa. Some indeed have taxed them with inconsistency, and even with dishonesty, for asking a right of a power which they disown.—But these charges are cruel and ungenerous, and they might just as well undertake to prove that Brutus or Cicero

hatrayed the cause of civil liberty, because they chose different means of procuring it. It is a good remark of Dr. Middleton's, that, though Cicero had blamed, in a letter to Atticus, an action of Brutus, and applauded in the senate that same action; yet there was nothing inconsistent in his conduct. But, says the Doctor, *with a proper allowance for different circumstances, this will be found entirely consistent; and both the one and the other perfectly agreeable to Cicero's character: First, to give the best advice to Brutus that he was able; and if that was rejected, then to make the best construction, and the best use of the measures, which Brutus chose to pursue.* Why have not Christians as much charity for their brethren, as Cicero, a Heathen, had for his?

“ Various are the lights in which this controversy may be considered, and each has its peculiar advantage, though his measures will be noblest who considers it in *every point of view.*——To those who love to have things traced to their principles it may be considered *philosophically*, if a philosophical *datum* be hurt it falls. To others a *theological* discussion would be most eligible, if any doctrine of christianity be injured it would destroy itself. To others again a *historical* deduction would elucidate best.—A history, composed on some such plan as *Volley's History of France*, would be a most agreeable present to this country. A thousand interesting events would appear, a thousand lively anecdotes would occur, a thousand rational reflections would be interspersed: Truth would narrate her travels in the grave and the gay, and readers would be driven either to place religion less in words and disputes, modes and forms, and move in its scriptural essence, *love to God and man; or to slander their ancestors by delivering them over to the devil of hell.*

“ But let the subject be viewed in what light soever it will, the reformation will be allowed a good and laudable work; and the reformation allowed, the principles of the petitioners cannot be denied. The most that can be doubted is their prudence, and could any imprudences of individuals be proved, the goodness of their designs would be a sufficient apology. Yet where is the imprudence of wishing felicity to the crown by contenting the state, piety to the church by gradually meliorating the spirits of her members? Who would hesitate a moment about what he would accept, had he the offer of governing a college or
keeping

keeping a jail? Intolerance makes churches and states resemble the last.

" *Others have laboured, and we have entered into their labours*, is the thankful acknowledgment of thousands in Britain. With a mixture of horror and pleasure, as men on the beach view a tempest at sea, they ken the gloomy papal storm, at first vaporizing in the brain of a proud priest, then labouring in the features of a surly synod, anon communicating itself to the state, then bellowing at the bar, thundering in the church, lightening at the stake, dreadfully and unmercifully overwhelming their pious predecessors in every imaginable distress. Yet with the highest satisfaction they behold their grand fires weather the point, out-live the storm, and bring the vessel, though all shattered and torn, into the harbour.

" In fine, different men, according to their different capacities, prejudices, or interests, will see the subject in different lights, and, without tainting their integrity, will adopt different measures of action. If a zealot be alarmed for his creed, 'tis because he thinks his creed essential to the happiness of his country. If one patiently and prudently endeavours to get rid of a grievance by degrees, and another resolutely refuses to ask any relief till he can obtain all, they differ only as creditors differ, when one will have all the debt or none, the other will take it by parts as the debtor can pay. Would it become an assignee, in a case of bankruptcy, when one creditor signs the bankrupt's certificate, and another refuses, to tax the first with destroying the nature of honesty, or the last with being void of humanity? Both may aim at their country's good. It is not for this obscure, though disinterested pen, to determine whose is the greatest merit, yet if it be not presumptuous, it will venture to scribble, that such as consider bad, but *old* maxims of government, as they consider bad habits of body, and apply in both cases a similar, that is, a slow relief, seem to have had the most comprehensive view of the matter.

" A large and comprehensive view of men and things best interprets the wise man's saying, *There is a time for every purpose, and for every work!* Separations in ethics, perhaps like dissections in anatomy, may produce queer effects, particularly in the various *means* used by good men to please God and profit mankind, as in this matter of

petitioning : but all that labour in the good cause of truth, viewed in their whole, each throwing some light on the subject, and all together producing at last a solid system of religious liberty, will discover a lovely symmetry. Such a view an excellent German historian had, when he praised *Luther* for making homely rhymes for the country people : *Erasmus* for the facetiousness of his colloquies : *Sainte Alderaende* for the comical tales in his romish hive : and old *Beza* for composing a song for the people of Geneva : these men had studied human nature, they thought *that a bait which caught a fish*, or in better style, *that he who winneth souls is wise* : and by these they conducted their brethren to the serious and sober folios of Calvin and others, all conspiring to dethrone the barbarity and tyranny of the bishop of Rome. Should any pretend to quibble at the little escapes of such men, the bulk of the world would know no more of it than of the anatomist's *inter scapularia*, and the rest would consider it as a north country lilly lawn, that is, a mere straw fire. Heaven prosper all that love religious liberty ! May they live in peace ! May the God of love and peace be with them !

LETTER I.

On Candour in Controversy.

“ **B**E ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear, is an excellent exhortation of St. Peter's to the primitive church. Christianity is elegantly filed the hope that is in you : this hope the apostle says, is rationally to be accounted for to every man that asketh. But what an essential in edifying controversy are men directed to ! *Meekness and fear*. The question and answer, the accusation and the defence, the inquiry and the apology are mutually concerned in it. Happy for the christian world had she obeyed this admirable direction.

“ Man's whole interest is truth, and the pursuit of it his noblest effort. A man of infinite complaisance to the ladies, sat down one day to study the opinions of the primitive

primitive fathers on baptism; after others, he began to study Tertullian's book on the subject. Imagining that the African father was as great an admirer of the ladies as himself, he did not doubt but he would be much edified by Tertullian's addressing QUINTILLA on baptism.—Wisdom, gravity, politeness, said he to himself, are united here to be sure. But how would you have smiled had you seen his panic, when he discovered in the fifth line of the first chapter, that Tertullian falls to abusing her, calling her a heretic, a viper, a serpent, an asp, a most monstrous creature, whose doctrine was of the most poisonous kind. Hah! cried he, is this an African *tete a tete*? Is this your spirit, Tertullian! If you're a gentleman, where's your breeding? If a christian, where's your meekness? If a philosopher, where's your good sense? Well, well, said he, (closing the huge book) perhaps Quintilla and you may be well met. E'en scold it out. I'll go and seek a gentler tutor.

“The question here is not whether your friend's conclusion from the premises was quite logical; whether asperity and argument may not be sometimes united; but whether passionate writers do not generally produce similar effects in their readers. People are naturally prepossessed in favour of a sufferer; they naturally become prejudiced against such a violent pleader; they cannot help saying, What's the matter? If your accounts be right, why so prodigiously agitated? You surely design to impose on us, and would deter us from detecting you. You are certainly conscious of having maintained a defenceless cause, and you are making effrontery supply the place argument: thus giving us brass instead of gold.

“People are never safe with antagonists of this fierce temper, they are formidable beyond expression in some places. Hence that smart reply of Dr. De Lounoi of Paris. The Doctor had made free to censure that angel of the schools, Thomas Aquinas. The Dominicans were exasperated at this, and apologized for their angelical Doctor. One day a friend said to De Lounoi, “You have disgusted all the Dominicans, they will all draw their pens against you.” Said he, with a malicious air, *I dread their pen-knives more than their pens.*

“The indolent prefer an easy faith to a painful search, and their reason bleeds on an altar erected to the love of ease.

ease. The impatient, like Pilate, ask; *What is truth?* But never wait for an answer. The proud, though not infallible, are always in the right. The sons of luxury or avarice, like Esau, prefer a meal to a brithright. What a waste of goodness would it be to propose truth to these? their minds are pre-occupied, and till their vices are dispossessed, it is morally impossible to alter them.

"A thousand apologies may be made for studious and serious men, when they miss their way in an argument. The prejudices of education, the want of information, the influence of company and example, gratitude for a past favour, hope in a future one, these, and more such topics will always afford pleas for honest mistaken men; pleas which may diminish the guilt of an error, though they cannot assign to it the merit of truth.

"Indeed, the man who undertakes to correct one's mistakes does one a great honour. He remonstrates in hope of reclaiming, but before he can hope to reclaim, he must pre-suppose all those amiable dispositions which enable a man to say, **I AM MISTAKEN.** Yet why should any man be ashamed of saying so? All men make mistakes; there is but one article in which wise men and fools differ; a wise man reforms his mistakes, a fool perseveres.

"You lament, (and indeed who can help lamenting?) the bad spirit of too many religious controversies. Religion is a sacred thing, and meekness is a part of it: whence then is it, that prejudice and passion in some, fire and flame in others, appear in these disputes? The gospel is nothing of all this; the gospel needs nothing of all this; all this disgraces the gospel: for which reason perhaps our Saviour forbad the devils to publish his mission.

"The fierce disputes of christians have always scandalized the good cause, and will always continue to do so, till mildness and moderation succeed violence: and then christianity will re-assume her primitive habit, and with that her native prevalence. Errors, like prostitutes, may paint themselves and pay their bullies, but let truth, especially religious truth, disdain such aid, and show the world a more excellent way.

"There is in the life of Archbishop Tillotson a fine example of the deportment here pleaded for. While Dr. Tillotson was Dean of Canterbury, he preached at Whitehall, before his Majesty, Charles the Second, a sermon, in

in which were these words.—“ I cannot think, till I am
‘ better informed (which I am always ready to be) that
‘ any pretence of conscience warrants any man, that is not
‘ extraordinarily commissioned, as the apostles and first
‘ publishers of the gospel were, and cannot justify that
‘ commission by miracles, as they did, to affront the esta-
‘ blished religion of a nation, although it be false, and
‘ openly draw men from the profession of it, in contempt
‘ of the magistrate and the laws. All that persons of
‘ a different religion can in such cases reasonably pretend
‘ to, is to enjoy the private liberty and exercises of their
‘ own consciences and religion, for which they ought to
‘ be very thankful,” &c. When the Dean had ended his
sermon, said a certain Nobleman to the King, who had
been asleep most part of the time, *’Tis a pity your Majesty
slept, for we have had the rarest piece of hobism, that ever
you heard in your life.* Ods fish, replied the King, *he shall
print it then.* He did so, and as soon as it came from the
press, sent one (as he usually did) to his friend, the Rey.
Mr. John Howe. Mr. Howe (you know) had been ejected
for nonconformity, and was at that time pastor of a con-
gregation in London. On reading the sermon he was
exceedingly troubled at the above cited passage, and drew
up a long expository letter on the subject. He signified
‘ How much he was grieved, that in a sermon against popery
‘ he should plead the popish cause against all the reformers.
‘ He insisted upon it, that we had incontestible evidences
‘ of the miracles wrought by the apostles, and that we are
‘ bound to believe them, without any farther expectations.
‘ What (said he) must the christian religion be repealed,
‘ every time a wicked governor thinks fit to establish a new
‘ religion? Must no one stand up for the true religion till
‘ he can work a miracle?’ &c. Mr. Howe carried the
letter himself and delivered into the Dean’s own hand, who,
thinking they should be less interrupted in the country,
proposed Mr. Howe’s dining with him at Sutton-court, the
seat of Lady Falconbridge. The invitation was accepted,
and Mr. Howe read over the letter to the Dean, and en-
larged on its contents, as they were travelling along toge-
ther in his chariot. The Dean, at length convinced of his
mistake, fell a weeping freely, and said, that this was the
most unhappy thing that had of late time befallen him.—
I SEE (says he) WHAT I HAVE OFFERED IS NOT
TO

TO BE MAINTAINED. Let bigots censure the good Archbishop Tillotson's friendship and tenderness to Dissenters; let them exclaim at his want of zeal; exclusive of the rest of his conduct, the single example above recited, will make you cry with Bishop Burnet, *His conduct needs no apology, for it is above it.*

(To be continued.)

[I am particularly requested to give the "Progress of Liberty," exactly as it was published, that the reader may judge of the merits of my cause with the conference.— This appears necessary, as thousands have never seen the pamphlet, and cannot have it alone, without a new edition.]

THE PROGRESS OF LIBERTY,

Amongst the People called Methodists.

To which is added, the out-lines of a Constitution. Humbly recommended to the serious consideration of the preachers and people, late in connexion with Mr. Wesley. By Alexander Killham, Minister of the Gospel.

Prove all things: hold fast that which is good. 1 Thess. v. 21.

P R E F A C E.

IT may be supposed by many of our brethren, that I have taken too much upon myself, in offering this pamphlet to the public; but, I hope, they will *candidly examine* the steps which have led to it, before they pass sentence against me. I shall give a brief sketch of the different occurrences which have engaged me to act the part I have done; leaving every person that reads these pages, at *full liberty*, to acquit or condemn me, as his own judgment shall determine.

In

In the beginning of the year 1785, I went to preach at Skendalby, near Spilsby, in Lincolnshire. The Rev. Ed. B——ry, with another clergyman, came to hear me. After I had asserted the words of St. Paul, “The Spirit bears witness with the spirit of every true christian, that he is a child of God,” the Rev. E. B——ry stopped me, and denied the assertion. We disputed this, and other points before his parishioners, near an hour; and when he could not obtain his end, he promised to send me a book, written by a *very learned bishop*, which was to convince me of my error, and lead me into the good and right way.—Before he left the house, I intreated him to allow me to finish my discourse, before the people were dismissed.—He granted my request, and we peaceably concluded our worship.

But when he had consulted with the other clergyman upon the subject, he was determined to exercise his authority as a magistrate; and therefore declared, the first preacher that went to that place, should be taken up. He also declared, if it had not been for his brother, at whose house I then resided, he would have sent me to Lincoln castle. We got the house licensed immediately. In a few weeks there was a quarter sessions in Spilsby, where I attended to take the oaths, which are necessary to qualify a dissenting minister for the pulpit. When I went to the bar, Mr. B——ry was one of the magistrates on the bench, and *violently* opposed me, in a very crowded assembly. He *pretended*, we were neither churchmen nor dissenters; and therefore had no right to the benefits of the toleration act, &c. We disputed for half an hour in the town's house, before all that were present. I wanted a licence as a methodist dissenter. He would not allow me to take the oaths under *any* profession. Another clergyman, who was with him on the bench, (and who wished we might go and perplex him, as they were a little at variance) took out a great book, and read the act of toleration to Mr. B——ry. They then proposed to give me a licence as a dissenter, and on no other terms. Being forced to have it on this condition, I submitted; and then went peaceably to preach in Skendalby, where many heard the word of God with pleasure. From that time, I have considered myself a *real dissenter*.

Mr.

Mr. Fish, one of our preachers, entered into a warm contest with me, on my calling the Methodists Dissenters. For two years, we had a paper war on the subject. We exchanged long letters once a month, each of us striving to make good his own cause. He was so warm for the church, that he often attended afternoon prayers, in the places where he preached; and he condemned every preacher that did not reverence the establishment. At length, however, he *laid aside his prejudice*, was ordained as a dissenting minister, and went to the West-Indies; where he preaches now with his gown and bands, to the great advantage of our cause.

Nothing very particular happened with me on this subject, till the year 1791. I was then closely besieged by the ruling elder of the Whitby society; who strove to *force* me into measures, which I could not in conscience submit to. He wished my wife might climb up a hundred and ninety steps to the church, after she had laid in, and give the parish priest sixpence to say over a few prayers on her account, and the clerk one penny, for the trouble he might be at in saying Amen. As we had a public prayer meeting every Friday in our chapel at 12 o'clock, *with her hearty consent*, we praised God there for his mercies, pleaded with him for future blessings, and saved *sevenpence*, by doing our own work. He then strove to compel me to let the minister baptize our child, but in this he could not prevail.

Soon after the death of Mr. Wesley, I answered the letter that was published from Hull, and sent it anonymous to Newcastle. The preachers, leaders, and stewards of that society who were of the same sentiments, made a few slight alterations in it, and published it, with a postscript of their own.

Contrary to my expectations, and against my desire, I was appointed to labour in Newcastle circuit, at the conference in 1791. After Mr. Cownley had received a second abusive letter from Mr. G—— (a leader of that society) he told me his mind was exercised with various things, which led him to determine not to open it. He gave me the letter, desiring, if I thought it was worthy of an answer, to write to Mr. G——. I wrote him my mind freely on the subject. He replied. I answered his reply. He sent my answer back sealed up, as though it had
never

never been opened ; but *ungenteely* took an imperfect copy before it was returned ; which he afterwards published.— He begun the correspondence again, which I answered.— After waiting a few weeks, *contrary to my knowledge, and without my consent*, he published all the letters which had passed on the subject, with a very bitter postscript of his own : and spread the pamphlet throughout the neighbourhood. As the letters did not contain my sentiments fully on the subjects in dispute, I wrote a pamphlet, called “ An Address to the Friends and Members of the Newcastle Society,” and published it early in the year 1792. Whoever reads the Letters and the Address, *with an unprejudiced mind*, will be *constrained to acknowledge*, that we had truth, and the scriptures of truth on our side.

I wrote many private letters on this subject before the conference returned : and a long answer to the printed letter from Leeds, signed by a number of the *Brethren and Sisters* of that place.

In July I was regularly summoned to attend the conference, to stand a trial, for writing my Address to the Newcastle friends. My *prosecutors and persecutors*, passed by Messrs. Bradburn and Thomas Taylor, though they both stood many circuits on the minutes before me, because they were great men, and my opponents thought they could not so soon crush them, and entered into a long examination of my *motives and conduct*. While I read an Address to the conference (which I am constrained to omit inserting here, for want of room) most of the preachers were in tears. When they had tried me part of two days, they could not find a single sentence in the pamphlet, but what Mr. Bradburn proved to be true ; yet they condemned it, as calculated to do mischief among our people. The Lord, however, graciously stood by me *through the whole trial*, and prevented me from being hurt by any of my enemies. Several of them soon embraced our sentiments, and have since that time been my steady friends.

I went voluntarily into Scotland to fill up a place, which afforded me all the religious privileges my heart could wish for. In the beginning of the year 1793, I had the principal hand in publishing a letter, signed Trueman and Freeman. It was reprinted in Newcastle, and circulated extensively through our connexion. The same year I answered the letter published by the London trustees of

the City Road Chapel, and replied to two letters which they sent me on the subject : none of these were ever printed.

Though I was exceedingly grieved on account of the illiberal sentiments that were published from the Leeds conference, yet I made no public reply to them. Many of us mourned in silence, and let answers to individuals suffice, who supported the sentiments of those letters. My time was taken up a good deal with the play-actors and others, who violently opposed a pamphlet which I had written, on horse races, cards, attending the play-house, and dancing. The Lord, however, enabled me to put to flight, the armies of those aliens.

In 1794 I was appointed to attend the conference in Bristol. On my way, in London, I became acquainted with the designs of a convention of trustees, that were then assembled in the New Chapel. In Bristol I wrote my mind freely to the conference upon the disputes that then agitated us ; but when the letter was read, several persons clamoured for its immediate destruction. A majority of the conference were hurried hastily to condemn it to be torn in pieces by the president, but they have since had cause to repent of that hasty step. If my letter had been properly considered, it would have prevented our religious contest last year, and been attended with many other advantages. I have not room in this pamphlet to publish it.—Several copies of it are in the hands of different friends.

When the war in Bristol had greatly agitated our connexion, I considered it my duty, to publish the letter, signed Aquila and Priscilla. It was reprinted in Bristol, and sent to a number of places, that it might give a fair representation of some things, which had then not been sufficiently considered.

When Mr. M——'s letter reached Aberdeen (a few days after I had sent mine to the office) I was very much grieved ; and determined if my way was made plain to answer it. After much deliberation and prayer, I published the letter signed Martin Luther : my name was withheld from both these letters, *for no other reason*, than to prevent any of them from being sent back, and to prevent being ruined by the postage of letters, that would have been sent to me on account of them. For, many would have rebuked, re-
proved,

proved, admonished, cautioned, &c. I foresaw this evil, and hid myself from its influence.

I wrote the pamphlet signed Paul and Silas, several weeks before the conference. After advising with a few of my brethren, it was sent, in Manchester, to the press.—Mr. Suter added the observations, which begin at the 20th page, and finish the pamphlet. It was given to the preachers the first day the conference met. I hope none of these labours have been in vain.

In the time of the conference, many of us refused to vote for different articles of pacification. We entered our protest against them at the time they were read. When we saw an appearance of some of our rules being capable of two meanings, I drew up the following Address to the conference, which was signed by 57 of the preachers. Many more would have signed it, if they had had an opportunity. Most of those that did sign, were *very respectable* men, as their names would testify were I to publish them.

“Honoured Fathers and Brethren,

“We are *extremely sorry*, that any thing should cause us to differ in sentiment, from a majority of the conference. We are *constrained* to do it, from a principle of truth and honesty. It appears to us, that no rule made in this house should be capable of bearing a double meaning. We are sorry to find an *appearance* of duplicity in some of our rules. We exceedingly object to the addition which is made to the first proposition of reconciliation, unless you add to it Messrs. Thompson, Benson and Bradburn’s explanation of the word *separation*. If this be not granted, we jointly enter our protest against that, and every other rule of the same nature. And intreat the preachers met in conference, to respect their character, by making their rules so explicit, that no person may misunderstand them. We are your affectionate brethren in the Gospel, &c.”

Is there any thing in this Address, but what *reason* and the *Bible* require? A clamour, however, was made against us, before it was read, and the President *actually suppressed* it, without its being publicly read to the preachers. Several cried out, it was designed to divide us; and, it was

some time before they would cease complaining on this head. Does not this Address breathe the spirit of the gospel, in advising the conference to make its rules and laws so explicit, that they may be known by all? And in recommending truth and honesty in all our measures? If this divide us, *what is it that keeps us together?* If our opposing brethren had suffered it to have been read, it is very probable, they would have been of a different mind.

By conversing with several of our most sensible and pious brethren in the ministry, on the necessity of having our matters better adjusted, I have been led to offer my sentiments upon different subjects. I have no design to *injure* the cause of Methodism, or to lessen any of our brethren in the esteem of the people; but to prevail, *if possible*, on the preachers every where, to fix such a constitution, as shall unite us to our followers, in such bonds, as shall never be broken. This would lead us to labour comfortably in the vineyard of Christ, and constrain the world to acknowledge, that we have been with Jesus.

I make no apology for what I have done. But humbly intreat all that read these pages to believe, that I have *aimed* at glorifying God, and being useful to our connexion, in all that I have written. If I am deceived, I hope God will prevent me from continuing in that state.

May every blessing necessary for our future prosperity be granted to us in Christ Jesus! And may the people of every nation and tongue, share with us, in the blessings which are purchased by the blood of the everlasting covenant, that we and they may be happy, through the ages of eternity!

ALEXANDER KILHAM.

ALNWICK,
Sept. 14, 1795. }

THE
PROGRESS OF LIBERTY
AMONGST THE
METHODISTS.

IT is unnecessary to repeat what has been said to the honour of our father in the gospel, Mr. Wesley. Persons of every denomination have owned that, he was a special instrument in the hands of the Lord, in reviving vital religion in these nations. And his enemies have been *obliged to acknowledge*, that his labours in the ministry, exceeded those of any other man, since the reformation: if not since the days of the apostles.

When the Lord crowned his ministry with abundant success, he generously accepted of the help of lay preachers, after the clergy had refused to come forward to assist him. He was conscious, that Jesus Christ, his Lord and Master, had made choice of poor illiterate fishermen, and others, to spread the good tidings of salvation through the nations. He was happy in beholding the labours of the men he had accepted to help him in the ministry, owned of God in the conversion of many sinners.

This great and good man, enlarged the sphere of his *glorious course* every year; and had the happiness of seeing thousands of myriads brought unto God, by the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. New places were opened,—societies raised up,—local and travelling preachers called to labour in the vineyard of Christ,—and many, very many, were constrained to testify, that God was with him. National churches and dissenters of every denomination, were provoked to emulation, and great good abounded to multitudes, that would neither join our societies, nor even stoop to hear the doctrines which he and his brethren preached. See Oliver's Defence of Methodism.

Notwithstanding Mr. Wesley's great attachment to the national church, he shewed a liberality of sentiment, that is hardly to be met with in any other person. When he first founded societies in different places, he accepted persons of different persuasions, to become members of his community, without desiring them to leave the places of worship they had formerly attended. This plan was productive of the happiest consequences. A multitude of

church-men, and very many dissenters, gave him the right hand of fellowship; and continued in connection with their own communities.

But as he wished to become all things to all men, he soon found it necessary, to have service in church hours, with baptism, the Lord's supper, and burial of the dead, in London. In Kingswood also, he considered it his duty, to let the poor colliers worship in their own chapel, without constraining them to attend at any neighbouring church.

When the societies and congregations became numerous in many places, and found it either inconvenient to attend other places of worship, or the wicked lives of ministers and communicants prevented their going with a good conscience, he yielded to their intreaties, and allowed them the privileges they requested. This liberty not only introduced preaching into many of our chapels in church hours, but led the Methodists in Scotland to petition and obtain, the privilege of all the ordinances of the gospel, in their own places of worship.

It is generally supposed, that ministers of the gospel of *every denomination*, are more liberal in their principles than their people. They have more time for reading and study, than most of their hearers. This enlarges their minds, and is eminently calculated to banish from them superstition, bigotry, prejudice, and party spirit. This was the case with Mr. Wesley. In the infancy and youth of Methodism, he wrote several things in favour of our people continuing united with the church. In the pulpit he frequently insisted upon the same subject. This led many of his *old friends* to be champions for the church of England, principally on his account; and constrained them to go beyond him in their zeal for the establishment. But when he saw it necessary to give the people in Scotland, and many societies in England, liberty to worship in church hours, &c. they thought him inconsistent, and cried loudly against what they called *innovation*. If they had stood in his place, with the same *enlarged views*, it is very probable, his conduct would have met with their cordial approbation. But as this was not the case, he submitted to their reproach, and kept constantly enlarging his course.

What

What they considered as foibles in his character, were some of the most *praise worthy actions of his life*. He never considered himself infallible. He saw it necessary to recede from his *general maxims*, in particular cases and circumstances. He opposed, as every sensible Methodist would do in our present situation, an open avowed separation from the church of England. But at the same time, he was sufficiently convinced, that there were cases in which it was not only lawful, but *expedient* for our people to withdraw from *some ministers*, and worship in church hours in our own chapels. He justified the steps he took, both by conversation, and in the different pieces he published on the subject.

While several of his old friends condemned him for giving liberty to many congregations, to worship as they were persuaded would be most for the glory of God, a greater number of his most sensible and pious followers, both preachers and private members, supposed, he restricted the liberties of his people too much in many places; and did not allow them all the privileges which they had a right to demand of him, by the *authority of the scriptures*. Between the two parties, he was brought into a very critical situation. On the one hand, his love for the church of England, and his desire to spread a leaven of vital religion through all her members,—what he had written in favour of the church, and his people communicating with her.—A number of his old friends who had stood by him when he was most exposed to danger, and their earnest intreaties for no alteration to take place in his plan; these things had a powerful influence on his mind. On the other hand, the wickedness of many clergymen, and their preaching expressly against the articles and homilies of the church.—Our people in many places determining not to hear them: but either to spend the best part of the sabbath in sauntering from house to house, or joining the dissenters,—their claiming liberty to worship God in their own chapels, and declaring *he lorded it over their consciences*, if he would not grant them this privilege.—Many of his most sensible and pious helpers in the gospel pleaded the cause of these persons, with arguments founded on the scriptures, and from reason enlightened by the Spirit of God,—these things in conjunction greatly affected him. What could he do in these circumstances? Could he have withheld

withheld what he granted without acting out of character? Could he have granted less with any probability of giving them any satisfaction? It is supposed by many, to whom he often spoke his mind freely, that had he followed the sentiments of his own heart, he would have given our people every where, perfect liberty to worship God as they pleased. But this he could not do without offending many of his friends. And for the sake of peace, he endeavoured to satisfy those, who urged him to allow them all the privileges of the gospel, by observing, he had gone as far as the present circumstances would admit of.— He *foresaw* and *foretold*, what would happen after his death. He also gave directions how his sons in the gospel should act, when he was no more at the helm of their affairs.— He advised that the separation might be gradual, not instantaneous. He observed, some persons in taking a coat to pieces, would rent it at once, but others would rip the seams stitch by stitch. By this metaphor he advised us to separate by degrees from the national church. These were his sentiments, as many can testify, when it pleased God to call him to rest from his labours. When we take a general view of the steps he took in this intricate and perplexing business, we are constrained to acknowledge, that all things considered, he acted as a *wise master builder* in the cause of Christ. He now rests from his arduous labours, and his works will follow him for ever. May we follow him in *every thing*, as far as he followed the Lord Jesus: that we may finish our course with joy, and share with him in the pleasures that are at God's right hand, through the ages of ages!

In the time of the American war, the minds of thousands were stirred up to examine both civil and religious principles. And after the Americans obtained peace on such terms as they wished for, this caused a general enquiry to take place throughout Europe, on the most interesting subjects of government and religious establishments. As we had many preachers in America, it was natural for us to be anxious on their account. But when we saw their work prospering, and their numbers rapidly increasing, we were constrained to own, that God was with them. Those of the preachers that deserted the work on account of their *political principles*, have been of little or no use in our connexion since: while those of our brethren

brethren who nobly stood by the work of the Lord in the dark and cloudy day, have been abundantly blessed in their labours. Many of them are still running to and fro, like burning and shining lights, to spread the knowledge of God and of Christ to all that attend their ministry. The Lord has so *gloriously*, and so *singularly* owned the word of his grace, by our preachers in that part of the world, since the late disastrous war, that the most prejudiced amongst us, have been obliged to wonder and adore.

It would be exceedingly unjust to suppose, that a large majority of our preachers while Mr. Wesley was living, never thought for themselves. Many of them examined our doctrines and discipline, with the greatest impartiality.— They did not place implicit confidence in any man, or in any number of men. Their sentiments on religious liberty were communicated freely to Mr. Wesley, and they contended frequently, for every society and congregation to be allowed to worship God as they pleased. Both in private and in open conference, they endeavoured to maintain the rights of those, who could not conscientiously worship in the church of England. At the same time, however, they *considered it their duty*, to be subject to Mr. Wesley and a majority of their brethren, as far as they could do it to the glory of God. They were thankful in having such a large sphere of publishing the good tidings of salvation opened before them; and were encouraged to hope, *that in due time*, all our societies would be delivered from every principle, which militates against their happiness. It is exceedingly unjust to insinuate, that they were men of bad principles, because they submitted to Mr. Wesley, in what they *never considered* as essential to the salvation of souls. It was their *glory* to submit as they did; and will be to their praise in future, by all that are unprejudiced.

When the Lord graciously called our venerable father to his great reward, the scene was altered. Those things which he maintained purely by his own influence, as the founder of methodism, and which were submitted to, on account of his age and great usefulness in the church, became subjects of debate. The minds of the people and the preachers were a good deal agitated, before the conference met in 1791. The signal gun was fired from Hull, for trustees, stewards, leaders, and private members,

to resolve in every place, to continue united with the church of England. This was seconded by many of our principal societies ; but opposed by others. Many letters were circulated before the meeting of the conference. Many things were said in defence of the people having an *unalienable right* in any place, to worship God, as they considered would be most for his glory : while a general cry was made from every quarter, for us to adhere strictly to the church, and allow no innovations.

(*To be continued.*)

EXTRACTS

From Lord KING's Primitive Church, during the three first Centuries.

IN the reasons he assigns for writing we have these words, " To inform others, and to inform myself. To inform others what the practices of the primitive apostolical churches were ; or, if I am mistaken, (as who is without his errors ?) to be better informed myself, I must needs confess, was what I chiefly aimed at in this publication.

" The word Church is often to be understood of the church universal. That is, of all those throughout the world who professed faith in Christ, and acknowledged him to be the Saviour of mankind. 2. This word is frequently to be understood of a *particular church* : that is, of a company of believers, who at one time, and in one and the same place, did associate themselves together.—Tertullian thinks, that three were sufficient to make a church. In this sense we are to understand many expressions in the scriptures. 3. It frequently means the invisible church : that is, for those who by a sound repentance, and a lively faith, are actually interested in the Lord Jesus Christ. Where the church is called the spouse of Christ ; and where he is represented as married to believers, this must be understood of the invisible church.

" But

“ But the usual and common acceptation of the word, is that of a particular church, a society of christians meeting in one place. This is that of which we chiefly treat.

“ Now the first thing that naturally presents itself to our consideration, is to inquire into the constituent parts of a particular church. In general they were called the elect.—And in innumerable places were called *brethren*.—We may divide them into two parts—into the people that composed the body of the church, and into those persons who were set apart for religious and ecclesiastical employment.

“ *The apostles went forth preaching in city, and country, appointing the first fruits of their ministry for bishops and deacons, leaving them to govern and enlarge those particular churches, over which they had placed them. There was but one bishop, strictly so called, in a church at a time, who was related to his flock as a pastor to his sheep, or a parent to his children. This is he, which in the Revelation is called the Angel of the Church, which appellation denotes his authority and his office. The word diocese, by which the bishop's flock is now usually expressed, was not used in this sense by the ancients. The bishop's diocese did not exceed the bounds of a moderate parish, as all the people on a Sunday met in one place for divine service. They had but one communion table, to celebrate the sacrament, the whole brotherhood being present. The christians received the sacrament of the Lord's-supper from the hands of the bishop, three times a week. He also generally administered baptism alone, throughout his diocese. All the charity of the church was deposited with him, that he might relieve the poor and distressed. All the people of a diocese were present at church-censures—the offender is said to appear before the whole church—the censures of the church, St. Clemens Romanus calls, *The things commanded by the multitude*. No offenders were restored again to the church's peace, without the knowledge and consent of the whole diocese. Cyprian writes, that before they were re-admitted to communion, they were to plead their cause before all the people. And it was ordained by an African synod, that except in danger of death, or an instantaneous persecution, none should be received into the church's peace, without the knowledge and consent of the people.*

When

When the bishop of a church was dead, all the people of that church met together to chuse a new bishop. It was a custom throughout all Africa, for the bishop to be chosen in the presence of the people. At the ordination of the clergy, the whole body of the people were present. At an African synod, held 258, it was determined, That the ordination of ministers ought to be done, with the knowledge, and in the presence of the people. That the people being present, either the crimes of the wicked may be detected, or the merits of the good declared, and so the ordination may be just and lawful, being approved by the judgment and suffrage of all. Lastly, The whole diocese did meet together, to manage all church affairs. Thus when the schism of Falicissimus in the bishopric of Carthage was to be debated, *It was to be done according to the will of the people, and by the consent of the laity.* And when there were some hot disputes about the restitution of the lapsed, the said Cyprian promised the whole diocese, *That all those things should be examined before them, and be judged by them.* And so also, when they were to send a messenger to any foreign church, all the people could meet together to chuse that messenger, as they could in the church of Philadelphia. In all ordinations, all the people were consulted, and none were admitted into holy orders without their approbation, as asserted by Cyprian, the bishop of the diocese, who tells us, that it was his constant custom, *In all ordinations to consult his people, and with their common counsel to weigh the merits of every candidate of the sacred orders.*—Nothing was done by Cyprian in his diocese without the consent of the people.

Presbyters were the bishops' assistants, and so inferior to them in the actual exercise of their ecclesiastical commission: They were equal to them in order, though not in degree, the bishop had the direction of all affairs belonging to the church.

The deacon's office was to serve tables, looking after the poor, and an attendance on the Lord's table. They occasionally preached, and assisted in administering the sacrament. The office of the sub-deacons was to assist and help the deacons. It is probable they were of the same order with the deacons, only under their direction. There were lector also, employed in meaner offices. These were candidates

didates for the ministry, who by the due discharge of meaner employs, were to give proof of their ability and integrity.

Deacons were ordained by prayer and imposition of hands. Candidates for the ministry offered themselves to the presbytery, who closely examined their endowments.—They were to be of a suitable age—not entangled with the affairs of this world—to be humble, meek, and of an unspotted life—possessed of ability fit and able to teach others—they were a suitable time on trial before the other ecclesiastics—and their names were published or propounded to the people of that church where they were to be ordained; and so, if worthy of that office, they might have the testimony and attestation of the people; or if unworthy and unfit, they might be debarred and excluded from it.

If the people approved of their fitness for that office, the next thing that followed was actual ordination, which was by the imposition of the hands of the bishop and the presbytery. It often happened that other bishops and presbyteries assisted.—If the bishops or presbyteries proved scandalous or grossly wicked in life, or heretical in doctrine, and apostates from the faith, as they had power to elect, so they had power to depose them, and to chuse others. In general, all things relating to the government and policy of the church were performed by their joint consent. The people were to do nothing without the bishop: and on the contrary, he did nothing without the knowledge and consent of the people. When any letters came from foreign churches, they were received and read before the whole church, and the whole church agreed upon common letters being sent to other churches.

As for the judges that composed the consistory or ecclesiastical court, before whom offending criminals were convened, and by whom censured, they will appear to have been the whole church, both clergy and laity; not the bishop without the people, nor the people without the bishop, but both conjointly constituted that supreme tribunal, which censured delinquents and transgressors. From the different attribution of the power of the keys, we may infer this, That it was lodged both in bishops and people, as that each had some share in it. The legislative, decreative, or judicatorial power appertained to both clergy and laity, who conjointly made up that supreme, consistorial

court, before which all offenders were tried ; and, if found guilty, sentenced and condemned. Among many testimonies St. Cyprian is most full in this matter. When two sub-deacons of his parish had committed some great misdemeanors, he professed that he himself was not a sufficient judge of their crimes, but *they ought to be tried by all the people!* Thus every church was in this sense independent ; that is, without the concurrence and authority of any other church ; it had a sufficient right and power in itself, to punish and chastize all its delinquents and offending members.

Though the churches were strictly independent of each other, yet they were closely united. Synods were convened for the regulation and management of all ecclesiastical affairs within their respective jurisdictions. Here they consulted about the discipline, government, and external policy of their churches, and what means were expedient and proper for their peace, unity, and order, which by their common consent, they enacted and decreed to be observed by all the faithful of those churches whom they did represent.

The unity of the church did not consist in an uniformity of rites and customs ; for every particular church was at liberty to follow its own proper usages : one church was not obliged to observe the rites of another, but every one followed its own peculiar customs. In most provinces their rites were varied according to the diversity of names and places ; and that for this no one ever departed from the peace and unity of the catholic church. Neither, in the next place, did it consist in an unanimity of consent to non-essential points of christianity, but every one was left to believe in these lesser matters, as God should inform him. Therefore, Justin Martyr, speaking of those Jewish converts, who had adhered to the Mosaical rites, says, that if they did this through their weakness and imbecility, and did not persuade other christians to the observance of the same judaical customs, *that he would receive them into church fellowship and communion.* Whosoever imposed on particular churches the observance of the former of these two things, or on particular persons the belief of the latter, they were esteemed not as preservers and maintainers, but as violaters and breakers of the churches' unity and concord.

The

The unity of the church universal consisted in an harmonious assent to the essential articles of religion, or in an unanimous agreement in the fundamentals of faith and doctrine. The bond of union was broken, when there was a recession from, or a corruption of the true faith and doctrine. So that the unity of the church universal consisted in an agreement of doctrine, and the corruption of that doctrine, was a breach of that unity; and whoever so broke it, are said to divide and separate the unity of the church: or which is all one, to be schismatics. The unity of the church collectively may have consisted in a brotherly correspondence with, and affection towards each other, which they demonstrated by all outward expressions of love and concord, as by receiving to communion the members of each other. Now this union was broken when particular churches clashed with each other; when, from being possessed with spirits of meekness, love, and charity, they were inflamed with hatred, rage, and fury against each other. But that which they generally and commonly called schism, was a rebellion against, or an ungrounded and causeless separation from their lawful pastor, or their parish church. Several causes could justify the people's desertion of their pastor—apostacy from the faith—or when a bishop renounced the christian faith, through fear of persecution. The second cause was heresy. They were allowed to separate, if they could accuse him of false and heretical doctrine. The third cause was a scandalous and wicked life. Schism then, consisted in a person's separation from communion with his lawful bishop, without a just cause.

A church collectively, or the majority of a church, with their bishop, could change their old customs, and introduce new ones, as was done in the affair of Easter; the Asiatic at length submitting to the Roman usage; but till that was done, every member was required to follow the old customs of the church to which he belonged, and not to bring in any innovations, or new rites, because, as was said before, that would beget tumults and disorder. The majority only could change the customs, &c.

An Extract of a Memorial presented to Two Congregations, in Cambridge, who had been divided, exhorting them to unite in Fellowship, as they were united in Doctrine and Discipline. Applicable to the Methodist Connexion at this Time.

“CHRISTIANITY owes its institution to the love of God, and is admirably calculated to rectify the disorders, in which sin has evidently involved all mankind, and then only can it be said fully to answer the benevolent designs of its author, when the wolf lies down with the lamb, and the leopard dwells with the kid ; or, what is the same, when barbarians, scythians, bond and free, are one in Christ Jesus ; who ceasing to daub with the untempered mortar of party zeal, join together in building a church, founded in faith, and cemented by love, at once glorious to God, and advantageous to men.

“It is not now necessary to inquire by what means so many divisions have been made in the church of Christ ; it is enough to observe, that they were neither authorized by Christ, nor encouraged by his apostles. The Lord, above all things, pressed the necessity of union and love ; and the apostle Paul ordered some of the first churches to mark that man who caused divisions, and to avoid such a one ; doubtless because such a dividing spirit was as destructive of their peace, as of Christ’s command ; wherever encouraged, would dissolve the church into parties, till true religion evaporated, leaving the unhappy partisans only a name to live, while in fact they were dead. If the whole moral law is contained in one word, love ; if the whole gospel is a system of love ; if love is that badge whereby men are known to be Christ’s disciples ; if when all the graces of the Spirit are reduced to three, the greatest of these three is love ; if that legislator, who has enjoined every duty, has, twice in the New Testament, assured us that he requires us, above all things, to have fervent love among ourselves, surely he must be totally ignorant of God, the law, the gospel, human nature, and his own heart also, who can dispense with the absence of so necessary a christian-temper, for any circumstantial in religion. Who thinks himself authorized to divide from a society, and cease to love the members of it, merely on account of some

some small difference in sentiment, or practice. This I will venture to say, that nothing has contributed so much to weaken the church of Christ, nothing has had so great a hand, in reducing her to her present feeble condition, as the unchristian and impolitic divisions of her members, who ought never to make two churches, where one would do: for while, by such means, they serve a party, they deserve real religion. Such (as a sensible writer says) are friends of the church, but enemies of God, and from such a spirit the Lord deliver all honest-hearted christians. If the above-mentioned christian, and pacific tempers are needful any where, if the above reasons are weighty any where, they are at Cambridge.

“First, There does not subsist any difference between the two congregations in doctrine or discipline, except the single article of baptism, and that difference, as both the churches allow, is not sufficient to divide a people; for it is to be observed, that those reasons which will justify two churches continuing asunder, will also justify one church dividing into two; but where no such reasons are, it is plain, a junction is lawful. It is taken for granted, that if the two were one, no member would think there was a just cause of separation; and if there is no cause of making two, there can be no cause of keeping so.

“Secondly, We have a precedent for the practice in the first churches. Then circumcision, keeping of ancient Jewish, or Gentile festivals, eating and abstaining from certain meats, were bones of contention among the Jews and Gentiles: Yet it is said, to the honour of Christ, that he made of twain one new man, so making peace: and good reason there was for their being one: the kingdom of God is neither meats, nor drinks, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: Let us, therefore, follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

“Thirdly, We have also an express command for such a work, *Rom. xv. 7. Receive ye one another*, that is the duty exhorted to, *As Christ hath received us*, that the rule, by which we are to do the duty, *To the glory of God*, that is the end to be answered by a compliance. If Christ, therefore, has received both churches, both are here exhorted to receive each other. If we have a divine command, an authentic evidence of precedents, and no difference

Assisting to tempt us to act contrary, the lawfulness of an union is clear beyond contradiction.

“ The expedience of the step appears by observing, first, That it is the true interest of the dissenters (as of all other associations engaged in one design) to be unanimous. If divisions have weakened the cause, as they evidently have, a junction must of necessity strengthen it: two are better than one, and a threefold cord is not easily broken.

“ Secondly, An union would annihilate all those unbecoming bickerings, jealousies, and cavillings, which almost always attend the members of two societies so near neighbours. Some will always (through mistaken zeal) be guilty of such things, imagining that the weakening of one church is the strength of the other: but when one cause is only on foot, the weakest must perceive, that the interest of one is the interest of all; and all the former animosities, being but effects of division, must needs die with the cause that produced them.

“ Thirdly, Such an union would be much to the credit and reputation of religion:—How pleasing the prospect! A large church walking in love—a respectable congregation—a minister well provided for—poor comfortably assisted—every thing done with credit and honour. How preferable such a case to the narrow views of any partisans whatever! and all this noble acquisition (grateful to all but bigots) the easy purchase of the spirit of love!”

If these remarks are applied to the Methodist connexion, how easy it would be for the preachers to make the body one for ever! No difference subsists about doctrine, or discipline in general. The difference now is about matters of another kind. That is, whether the preachers shall retain a power to rule the people without consulting them, or permit delegates from among them to sit in the district meetings, and in the conference, to help in managing all their affairs? If mutual deliberation and mutual concurrence in every thing, between the preachers and people were established, then union, harmony, and love would prevail. But should a few leading preachers determine to retain their undue power, and influence a majority of their brethren to sanction their measures, the breach will be widened, divisions will be fomented, love will be banished, union will not continue in any part of the body.
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and harmony will give place to a thousand things contrary to God. How easy it is for the preachers to grant the people all they want! They have no sacrifices to make but what the gospel requires. No loss to sustain, but what would prove gain to them in the end. Nothing to conquer to accomplish union and happiness for the body, but principles that they ought to detest in their own breasts.— They have every thing to hope for on this ground. The favour and approbation of God. Peace and satisfaction in their own minds. A conduct that can be justified before the church, and the world. The approbation and confidence of their own people, and persons of every denomination. The spreading of the gospel. The conversion of the nations. The salvation of the world. If they grant the people what they have a right to demand, they will do well, and their conduct will be acceptable. If they refuse to do this, they will act unwisely, and the sin of division will lie at their door.

To the Editor of the MONITOR.

SIR,

IN a former letter (signed O.) I undertook to prove, “That no individual or number of individuals, can have a *right on scriptural principles*, to introduce members into a religious society in opposition to the judgment of a major part: in the course of this extract it will be shown, that the admission and exclusion of members to or from the church, &c. &c. &c. was not the act of individuals, but of the major part of a christian society.”

The valuable treatise, from which the following remarks are selected, ought to be carefully read by all, who wish to have proper views of the nature and design of the christian church. The following extract, may give the reader an idea of the work itself, and direct his views on subjects deeply interesting, for the welfare of the followers of Christ. It is acknowledged by sensible persons, that this compendium exceeds every thing that has been written on the subject, in the English language. May the God of Jacob crown this selection with his special blessing, that it may be of service to thousands of myriads!

O.

EXTRACTS

From TURNER's Compendium of Social Religion.

MAN is a social being, he comes into the world with a disposition for society, and in a condition that requires it: we are led by a kind of natural instinct into some of the nearest social connexions, and those interchanges of offices and benefits that arise from them. Much of the wisdom and goodness of providence appears, in giving us this social capacity and disposition:—Without it, our noblest faculties would be of little or no use to us, for want of proper occasions for their exercise, and proper assistance in it. By following the dictates of social principles, we open to ourselves a way, for the abundant employment of all our genius and abilities; and by reciprocal aids and encouragements render them the most effectually and extensively useful. Hence domestic and patriot love, order, peace, friendship, and many other public and private virtues and blessings, of the greatest importance to mankind.

But then this disposition must be properly cultivated to produce these happy effects; and here RELIGION justly claims our first and principal regard. By *religion* I mean the acknowledgement, fear, love, and worship of the DEITY, with a disposition to obey all his known will, founded in the lively belief of his perfections, and a future state of retribution. Religion, be it only that of nature, as it is commonly called, will prevent us from sinking so low, and doing such prejudice to the social interest of mankind, as we should give place to without it: but if that of JESUS, sincerely embraced and followed, it will do infinitely more. It tends every way most effectually to promote and secure the happiness of society.

The exalted perfections of social unity and joy, which prevail in the heavenly world, and felicitates the general assembly and church of the first born, is owing to the perfection of their religion; and therefore they enjoy their social relations with such high satisfaction, and know all the pleasures of the most pure and benevolent friendship, without any of those alienations of heart, contentions, and jealousies, that attend the happiest societies on earth.—

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Upon social piety, the very existence of religion and virtue, in our world, and the preservation of many benefits to society, connected therewith, eminently depend. Were religious duties to be practised by us only in private, were there no assembling of ourselves together, to proclaim its excellencies and usefulness, and bear an open testimony by common consent in its favour; its public estimation would very soon decline; the least appearance of it be marked with disgrace, and treated with contempt by the bulk of mankind.

The religion of man, therefore, I say, in this world, must be social. The book of Psalms, the prophets, Jesus Christ and his apostles, make it abundantly evident, that social religion in general, and the constitution of christian churches in particular, necessary to the support and practice of it, are of divine appointment. Every serious christian, therefore, if he would follow the dictates of his social nature, the directions of the Word of God, and the example of the best of men—If he would improve himself in the power and comforts of the divine life—contribute most effectually to the support and propagation of true religion—do the highest honour to God, and the greatest good to the world—must connect himself, as he has opportunity, with some regular christian society, and unite with them, in all the ordinances and duties that God has promised to bless to those important ends. I hope the reader, instead of making what I here lay before him an occasion of wrangling disputes about church-government and power, (which have too much troubled the church already) he will rather consider it as a compendious system of christian duties acknowledged by all. If any one differs from me, let him do it with the same candor and charity which I differ from him; and make the best of his own plan, in the support and propagation of real piety and virtue, till he is convinced that he has found a better.

To conclude this preface, as the civil, spiritual, temporal, and eternal interest of mankind, and the credit of our holy religion in the world, depend so much upon the good order, real holiness, sincere and fervent charity of christian churches; I most heartily wish that they could by any means, be prevailed upon to attend to these important things, with more serious and cordial concern.—We ourselves justly complain of coldness, formality, disorder, and declensions

declensions in vital religion, as prevailing amongst us; the free-thinkers and the infidels of the age, look upon all our churches, with the utmost contempt: and represent them as mere creatures of crafty priests, the idols of their infatuated mobs, the supports of their tyranny and ambition; or little nurseries of senseless enthusiasm, bigotry, and mad zeal. Would to God we had never given occasion for such representations! But, could we but once be brought to think, and act agreeable to the spirit and genius of the gospel; to place religion, not in the little nostrums and peculiarities of a party, but in sincere repentance towards God, lively faith in our Lord Jesus, and the solid genuine fruits thereof in the works of piety, righteousness, benevolence, charity.—Instead of violently compelling one another to uniformity in lesser matters; could we learn to differ in opinion, without dividing in affection; oppose one another in meekness, forber one another in love, and receive with christian tenderness the weak in the faith; or instead of spending our religious zeal upon modes and forms, and things indifferent, unite and employ it in promoting real christian knowledge, and following after that peace and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Were our churches all formed upon such principles, and actuated by such a spirit, they would soon find (even though in other respects they continued still in their different forms) the God of holiness and peace dwelling among them—religion revive—the gospel ministry honoured and blessed. And thus, to their unspeakable satisfaction and comfort, and the utter confusion of the ignorance of those foolish men, who delight to reproach them—they would indeed appear to be, what they were originally designed to be, seminaries of divine knowledge, truth, love, piety, and every virtue—living witnesses of the great mercy and love of God to men. The brightest ornaments of the world, and the greatest blessings to it.

(To be continued.)

*Reflections on Popery.**To the Editor of the MONITOR.*

SIR,

AN unconnected multitude has great difficulties to encounter, in communicating their thoughts to each other; therefore it is every man's duty, according to his ability and opportunity, to make a stand against the spirit of popery, or any other ecclesiastical usurpation.

When I first read Dr. Gill's sermon (preached in London, 1750) wherein he gives his opinion, that popery would once more have an universal spread through christendom, and would revive again even in England: I could not join with him, because, thought I, popery can only be supported by ignorance; but light is spreading in the world more and more. Yet, from my own observations, I am compelled, of late, to acknowledge, that though popery has got a most dreadful fall on the Continent, and her head is severely wounded; yet she seems to be shaking herself from her slumber, and ready once more to walk abroad here in the open day. It is true, she must do this in a more crafty and cunning manner; and her policy must be of a more refined nature than formerly; otherwise she will be detected and put to shame.

It is worth while to look back, and see what was the condition of the western part of Europe about four or five centuries ago: The greater part of the laity were sunk into such a degree of ignorance, stupidity, and superstition, that it may be said, *they sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death.* But how could this be, seeing christianity was then established here, and the Author of it came to be the light of the world, and hath brought life and immortality to light by his glorious gospel? We must remember, that the love of power is congenial to the human mind; and, as the people were simple, and put implicit confidence in their teachers, these made use of the influence they had obtained over the minds of the people, and gradually extended their power to a very great height. We must suppose, however, that the first teachers were truly upright and disinterested in all their proceedings, and set an example of
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that piety which they inculcated and recommended to the people. But their successors (at least some of them) coming into the fruit of their labours, and availing themselves of that influence already gained, began, by imperceptible degrees to lose sight of their genuine calling, and to blend temporal power with things purely spiritual. Hence they inculcated a blind submission to the determinations of the church, pretending it to be infallible, and an implicit subjection to the clergy and the papal see.

When the infallibility of the Pope was given up, still the infallibility of the church was insisted on, and the maxim became so established, that to controvert, was to incur the severest censure; or to be accounted mad, presumptuous, or even devoid of common sense. Hence, when any of the clergy or their votaries were pushed hard in argument on any point, it was thought a sufficient answer to say, "The church has determined it so:" and thus the opponent was easily set fast, however reasonable his arguments might have been. I shall leave it to the unbiassed reader to enquire, whether there be any thing similar to this among any denomination of people now in England?

But is there any infallibility in general councils? Or, have their decrees been of general use to the church? As it was with Popes, one condemning and annulling the infallible decrees of some of their predecessors, so it often was with general councils. Therefore the church of England declares in her 21st article, "That general councils have erred, (even in important matters) because there have been men in them, not guided by the Spirit and Word of God:" And some of these have even presided in them.—Father *Paul* of *Venice*, (who wrote the history of the council of Trent) saith of general councils,—“Let no man expect good from them; for the needy and the ambitious (who always constitute a majority) will unite to make or support a Pope.” Perhaps the truth is, that interest, modesty, indolence, or some other cause, occasions men, who could give the best opinions, to withhold them, and yield to those of others more forward and domineering. We may add also, that when they assemble, they bring with them their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views. Therefore a perfect production cannot be expected from

from such an assembly. Hence we may conclude, that, though it is usual to take the sense of the majority, in any assembly, for the sense of the whole; yet it is by no means a mark of infallibility, or a certain criterion to judge by. Perhaps some, or many, of those who have been excommunicated by the church in former ages, as heretics, were upright and conscientious men, whose opinions were agreeable to the word of God: and the accounts we have of them were only handed down by their enemies.

With the love of power and secular interest, human policy crept in, and diffused itself far and wide in all places subject to the influence of Rome. But Christ saith, *his kingdom is not of this world*. It is established and supported upon principles quite different from those of human governments. In these there is much intrigue, craftiness, dissimulation, and other arts used, in order to deceive the people who are to be governed. But they who think to serve the interest of Christ by these means, or by any thing which in the least favours of guile, act contrary to his mind, and in reality hurt his cause. Mr. Law says, that "worldly wisdom was the great evil root, which early hurt the christian religion; and at this root the axe of reformation should have been laid, and must be laid, before the church can be again that virgin spouse of Christ, which it was in the beginning."

True religion is not promoted by sophistry, quibbling, chicanery, or guile. Lying never did any good to any cause whatsoever. There are various species and degrees of lying; prevarication, evasion, mental reservation, and misrepresentation. By any, or all of which the truth may be so disguised, that though the thing related may seem plausible in the eyes of men, yet it is a lie in the sight of God. To use a term in any other than the generally-received acceptance of it is quibbling: or to avail ourselves of an equivocal term, when we are pushed in controversy, is dissingenuous. Even what is said may be true in a certain sense; and yet it is a lie in the sight of him who is a Searcher of the Heart. Much depends upon the design of the speaker. He may by signs, inuendos, or various other ways, throw an idea into the mind of the hearer, which is contrary to the real fact. *He that maketh* (i. e. fabricates, or contrives) *a lie, shall not enter the new Jerusalem.*

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That ignorance is the mother of devotion, is a maxim long received in the church of Rome. Error and guilt dread discussion and enquiry: therefore the common people (who are the bulk of mankind) were kept in ignorance by the priests, that they might be the more obedient, and might minister to their vices. Or, sometimes their minds were kept in a continual hurry and agitation; and by this means they were deprived of the leisure or inclination to look into the miscarriages of their teachers. By creating parties and divisions among the people, and playing them against each other, the priests contrived to rule both, and even made them the tools of fabricating their own shackles. Is there any thing like this, now in the end of the eighteenth century, in England? Let those whom it may concern, enquire.

No doubt, but they who founded monasteries, convents, or religious fraternities, were good and conscientious men, though perhaps tinged a little with enthusiasm. But the members of these communities afterwards became gradually insolent and licentious. And as they were combined in one common interest, they used every art and colouring to cover each others vices. Some of them became common beggars: and in them was literally fulfilled what is said of Eli's son:—"Give it to me, or I will take it by force." A community or fraternity of this sort, are not only a nuisance, but in time become very dangerous to the public at large. Perhaps it may be thought scarcely necessary, at this day, to guard people against all such miscreants or impostors; but there are various ways of extorting money from the simple; though not by open force, yet by plausible stories, and by affecting the passions.—Individuals can do but little in this way; but a community of men of the above description, diffused through a nation, may injure thousands, before they are aware: therefore they who have any discernment, have a right to inform their brethren, by every sincere and conscientious communication which may promote the public happiness, or enlighten mankind. A general diffusion of knowledge will every day diminish the evils above alluded to.

Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as wisdom: and no such thing as true liberty, without freedom of speech. Guilt dreads liberty of speech, which drags it out of its lurking holes, and exposes its deformities
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and horrors to day light. Therefore all who intend to be oppressors of the people, have loudly complained of freedom of speech, and the liberty of the press; and have always endeavoured to restrain both. Hence arose the popish inquisition, a court where the most faithful, honest, and upright of men were dragged; and there condemned and executed, or put to the most excruciating tortures, merely for a thought or a word. Here their enemies were judges, witnesses, and executioners; and this blessed court was called the "House of Mercy!!!" Oh! are not thousands of souls under the altar, whose bodies were mangled by this court, now crying, "Lord, how long, how long, dost thou not avenge our blood?"

WICKLIFF.

N. B. The writer of this is no party-man; nor has he any connexion or acquaintance with the Editor of the Methodist Monitor; but he is a friend to truth, and he wishes to see it discussed more and more, let who will fall.

To the Editor of the MONITOR.

DEAR SIR,

AS a member of the society, and a friend to religious liberty, I venture to send you a few remarks on the christian religion; if they be found worthy a place in your Monitor, you may expect to hear from me again.

The kingdom of God, is not meat and drink; but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It may be easily understood, that by the kingdom of God, the apostle means true religion. That religion which the gospel was intended to promote in the world, and which it actually promotes, wherever it is received, in proportion as it is seriously and practicably attended to. Wherever men are governed by regard to the will and authority of God, there is the kingdom of God: and such men are his subjects. This kingdom or government of God over the hearts and actions of men, our Saviour and his apostles

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laboured to establish, by publishing the doctrines and precepts of true religion : and he will at last fully and universally establish it, by exertions of his regal and judicial power, when the gospel shall universally prevail, and he shall put down all opposite power and authority, and subdue all things unto himself. The gospel is now left to the natural course of things, and the voluntary use, or abuse of mankind, without any exertions of power or judgment on the part of our blessed Saviour, to preserve it either from neglect or abuse ; because “ his kingdom is not of this world ;” and it was not his intention to alter the natural course of things, by erecting a government on earth, and judging men in this life ; his judgment being reserved to those times and states, which are fore-appointed by the wisdom of God. Hence, it is come to pass, not only that the gospel hath been neglected and abused, but that a strange kind of government has been set up in the christian world, (as was indeed predicted) under the colour and pretence of being the kingdom of God, and his Christ : but in reality designed to supplant and destroy it. Instead of righteousness being established, we behold tyranny and iniquity. Instead of peace, discord and persecution.— Instead of joy in the Holy Ghost, spiritual corruption and misery. These consequences will always follow, when ever the will of ambitious and tyrannical individuals is substituted for the will of God, and religion is moulded according to their arbitrary decrees and superstitious inventions.

If any are solicitous to know where the kingdom of God is to be found, and by what marks it may be discovered ? We may answer, that the effects it produceth, by which it is to be distinguished from all false and deceitful pretensions, are righteousness, peace, and spiritual joy. These are the fruits by which the tree is to be known : fruits so noble and excellent, that nothing in nature can equal them. Wherever we see men conscientiously practising what they apprehend to be right, under the influence of divine principles formed in the heart—cultivating a spirit of peace and goodwill to their neighbours, and taking a pleasure in religious exercises, and good works ; we may be certain, that they possess the kingdom of God : and that such persons, how much soever they may differ from us, in words, or modes, or opinions, are his true and faithful subjects : because they are governed by the will of God ; and he governs

governs them, not only as he rules over mankind at large, and the material creation, (by his irresistible power) but by his free goodness; by his holy precepts; by the motives of his grace; by the hopes of his favour, and of the rewards of his heavenly kingdom.

The kingdom of God, or true religion and christianity, is not confined to any particular territory, or attached to any human constitution, whether civil or ecclesiastical; but is entirely distinct from all human power, and may subsist in any part of the world without it: because it is the government of God over men, not of men over one another; and the essential properties and marks of it, are righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, wherever these are, there is the kingdom of God.—Men may indeed set up governments, and even tyrannize over their fellow creatures in the world, and endeavour to support and extend their influence, by the colour and sanction of the christian religion: this has actually been done. The authority of God and of Christ, have been expressly assumed, as a foundation for worldly dominion; and Christian names, and titles of Holiness, have been affixed to the most insolent tyrants. The kingdom of God has been so confounded, according to men's imaginations, with the dominion of the Pope and his clergy, that to this day, the Roman Catholics have not been able to separate them in their own minds. But every kind of human power and government, is not only distinct and separate from the kingdom of God, but is opposite and injurious unto it: if instead of protecting men, in the practice of what they believe to be their duty, it oppresses them for doing it; if instead of encouraging men to live in mutual peace and charity, it cherishes discord; if instead of promoting the happiness, it tends to the misery of mankind.

That christianity is not of a local or external nature, our Saviour plainly declares to the Pharisees. The kingdom of God, saith he, cometh not with observation; neither shall men say, Lo here, or lo there. That is, its rise and progress, is not like that of an earthly conqueror, or worldly empire, with the noise of victory, and a shew of pomp and triumph; but the kingdom of God is within you. It does not consist in any kind of dominion or government which men may obtain over one another.—For when there was an ambitious contention among his

disciples, which of them should rise to the greatest power and pre-eminence in his kingdom, from a false notion that it would be a worldly dominion, he called them unto him, and said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister: and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

As the kingdom of God doth not consist in any dominion, much less in the tyranny of men over one another, neither is to be supported or propagated by any worldly means: least of all by the means of persecution, and oppression. This is St. Paul's declaration:—"The weapons of our warfare are not of a carnal or worldly nature, though mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strong holds of Satan."

It is indeed a direct contradiction to imagine that righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, can be promoted by mutual contention, abuse, and oppression:—By abridging men of their liberty, invading the rights of their consciences, assailing their persons, or by any means of hostility and compulsion. These things have indeed been practised in our church, and many others, under a solemn pretence of advancing the kingdom of God. But every person that judges impartially may easily perceive, that the real design and effect of their proceedings have been to support worldly dominion and tyranny, by destroying the liberty and enslaving the consciences of mankind. And it is much to be lamented, that any christians of any Protestant denomination, should have so far retained the sentiments and spirit of the Romish church, as to think that true religion, can be promoted by angry disputations, personal invectives, and calumnies. The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Mutual provocations do not promote peace; nor can mutual disgust and hatred produce joy in the Holy Spirit. The kingdom of God, therefore, is not advanced, but injured by all such proceedings.

If all christians had paid a due attention and regard to the apostle's doctrine on this subject, it would have prevented, or soon put an end to innumerable controversies, which,

which, instead of answering any good purposes, have disturbed men's minds, broke the peace of societies, and been productive of many grievous consequences. Men of honest dispositions and real piety have proceeded to great lengths of reproach, &c. from an error in judgment, and with a zeal without knowledge, in imagining those things to be of importance and essential to religion, which are of little moment, or entirely foreign to the kingdom of God.

Whatever professions therefore men may make of religion; whatever marks of devotion they may exhibit; whatever signs or evidences they may fancy to themselves of their being in a state of salvation; yet, if they take no pleasure in the practice of christianity, but rather have an aversion to it; if they are sober, peaceable, and honest only by compulsion; if they have no love of goodness; if instead of delighting in acts of piety, and charity, their devotion is attended with uneasiness, and their charity with reluctance; if they cannot rejoice in the testimony of a good conscience; if they are entire strangers to that holy and spiritual joy, which springs from the kingdom of God revealed in the soul; from benevolent affections, and from gospel hopes of divine favour, and a blessed immortality; such persons, whatever other kingdom, constitution, or church they may belong to, are strangers and foreigners to true religion: for the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Let us then adore and praise the Father Almighty, the Supreme Governor of the Universe, for his great goodness in sending his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, to set up a kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy upon earth; and in bringing us to partake of the privileges of this divine constitution. Let us seek, in the first place, the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and endeavour to become faithful subjects of it, by obeying and submitting to the will of God, according to the precepts and example of our blessed Saviour. Let us bear in our hearts a true allegiance, to the invisible head and ruler of it, by trusting in his protection, and by hoping for his gracious acceptance of our sincere affection and faithful service. Let us banish from our minds all hurtful delusions, superstitious fears, and vain cares and sorrows; and as becomes the happy subjects of such a sovereign, let us endeavour to practise righteousness,
live

live in peace, and reap the comforts and delights of true religion, of a good conscience, a holy temper, and a virtuous life : That so we may also obtain, to the blessed and joyful hope, that an entrance shall be administered to us abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour ; where perfect righteousness, uninterrupted peace, and fullness of joy, are established for evermore !

PHILELEUTHEROS.

The Euology of John the Baptist.

Extracted from Father Quesnel's Moral Reflections.

And as they departed, Jesus began to say to the Multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the Wilderness to see ? A Reed shaken with the Wind ? &c. Matt. xi. 7. &c.

ONE ought to avoid praising teachers in the presence of those, who esteem it an honour to be under them. Though the praise might not at all exalt the disciple, yet it may reach even the master, and either tempt or corrupt him. Jesus Christ is not a false friend, who dares not declare for him who is in disgrace ; on the contrary, he has spoken of and for St. John, *only since his imprisonment*. When the world persecutes good men, then is the time for those who belong to God, with prudence to imitate Christ, in relation to them. The first virtue of which Christ takes notice in St. John is his steadfastness ; and it is not without some mystery that he commends this virtue before all others, in this minister of his word. The second is his mortified life, which gives authority to his preaching. A preacher should have nothing which appears worldly, or which borders upon excess and *softness*. That man is mistaken who thinks to prevail upon the world, by conforming himself to its fashions and manners ; the world will much sooner entirely corrupt the heart which opens itself thereto.

Would to God, that in this age, luxury and *softness* were to be seen only *in kings houses* ! It is a greater misfortune than we imagine, to see these vices overflow all ranks and conditions of men : even those of the most moderate fortune ; this is what draws down the judgments of God upon

us.

us. The third advantage of St. John is his gift of prophecy, whereby he discovers Christ. This is indeed to be *more than a prophet*, for a man to point out the Saviour and sacrifice of the world, and to fore-show him by his retirement, his mortification, his preaching, and his faithfulness, so great as even to die for the sake of truth. Preachers ought to imitate him, and to be in some measure *more than prophets* in this respect. The fourth advantage of St. John is his being the harbinger of the Son of God. His mission is authorized by the scriptures, not by miracles, because it is not extraordinary. A man should be an *angel* in purity, in knowledge, in zeal, and in activity, *to prepare the way* for Christ in the soul. The fifth advantage of this holy fore-runner is his excellence beyond the other prophets, on the account both of his knowledge, and the sanctity of his life. The latter, not the former, renders a man *great* in the sight of God. The way to be exalted in heaven above others is to humble ourselves on earth below all. The *greatest* beyond comparison amongst all is he, who made himself the *least* of all, in stooping so low as to resemble sinners, and to become the lamb or sacrifice for sin. The sixth advantage of St. John the Baptist is to have set up the standard of repentance, which is the way to heaven. Heaven is not to be taken but by the violence which a man does to his inclinations. All right to eternal happiness is lost in Adam. It is not due to any one: this evangelical *violence*, is that which carries it as by conquest.—The seventh advantage of St. John is his having shewn Jesus Christ present; whereas the state of the law was no more than a state prophetic of his coming, in which his mysteries were represented and typified. Let us praise God that we live now after that all has been unfolded, that truth has succeeded figures, that the promises have their effect, that the prophecies are fulfilled, that Jesus is given, and that he has wrought the salvation of men. The last advantage which Christ would have us observe in St. John, is his having been an Elias by his office, his zeal, and his fidelity. In order that pastors may prepare the way for the coming of Christ into the soul, they should make him known by their faithfulness, their zeal, their mortification, their constancy, &c. Give us, Lord, some Johns and Elias's, who may both understand, and do for souls that which thou requirest of them.

EXTRACT

EXTRACT

From Mr. HERVEY's Reflections on a Flower Garden.

IN a grove of tulips, or a knot of pinks, one perceives a difference in almost every individual. Scarce any two are turned, and tintured, exactly alike: each allows himself a little particularity in his dress, though all belong to one family: so that they are various, and yet the same. A pretty emblem this, of the smaller differences between Protestant Christians. There are modes in religion which admit of variation, without prejudice to sound faith, or real holiness: just as the drapery, on these pictures of the spring, may be formed after a variety of patterns, without blemishing their beauty, or altering their nature. Be it so then, that in some points of inconsiderable consequence, several of our brethren dissent: yet let us all live amicably and sociably together; for we harmonize in principles, though we vary in punctilios.

Let us join in conversation, and intermingle interests; discover no estrangement of behaviour, and cherish no alienation of affection: if any strife subsists, let it be, to follow our Divine Master more closely, in humility of heart, and unblameableness of life; let it be to serve one another most readily, in all the kind offices of a cordial friendship. Thus shall we be united, though distinguished; united in the same grand fundamentals, though distinguished by some small circumstantials; united in one important bond of brotherly love, though distinguished by some slighter peculiarities of sentiment.

I apprehend, that between christians, whose judgments disagree only about a form of prayer, or manner of worship, there is no more essential difference, than between flowers that bloom from the same kind of seed, but happen to be somewhat diversified in the mixture of their colours.

END OF FIRST VOLUME.



I N D E X

T O

V O L U M E I.

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ERRATA.

Being generally at a distance from Leeds, I have not had an opportunity of examining the proof sheets of most of the numbers. The reader is requested to correct the following, or any other mistakes, which are found in this volume.

<i>Page.</i>	<i>Line.</i>
68	8 after to, add their.
78	12 for eight years, read eight days.
87	25 for orders, read order.
88	4 for it, read them.
101	10 for latter, read former.
108	9 for many, read money.
112	14 for know, read knew.
116	7 after alone, add to.
121	5, 6 for it is, read is it.
141	40 after book, add we thought.
187	23 after built, add but.
197	9 for deeds, read deed.
202	27 for love of, read love for.
209	last line for 44l. 8s read 50l. 8s.
213	17 for of right, read right of.
224	1 for plan, read place.
227	9 after thoughtless, add as.
245	33 for enjoys, read enjoins.
246	27 for stall, read shall.
261	40 for follow, read follows.
272	16 for providential, read prudential.
290	2 for assemble, read assembled.
295	16 for affairs, read officers.
298	13, 14 for thy, read my.
301	33 for body, read deed.
313	27 for points, read the pious.
317	32 for relationed, read relation.
328	31 for move, read more.

